A SIGN OF AFFECTION



5

suu Morishita

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Sign.17

Oushi's World



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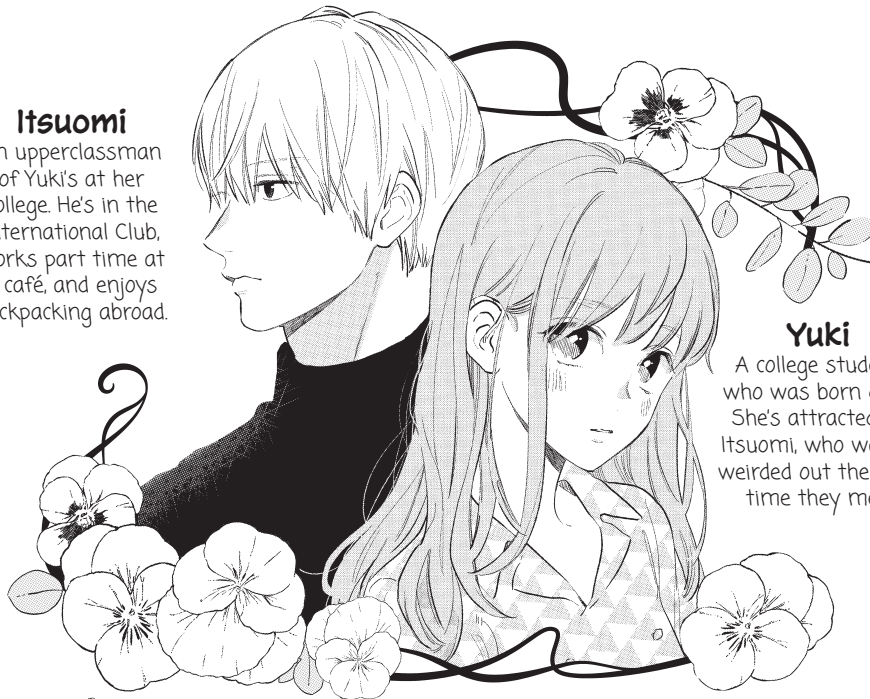
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*When the letters in the bubbles are washed out, it means that Yuki is reading the speaker's lips and discerning words from the context of the conversation. When the letters are shown sideways, it means she's having difficulty figuring out a word.

CHARACTERS



Itsuomi
An upperclassman of Yuki's at her college. He's in the International Club, works part time at a café, and enjoys backpacking abroad.

Yuki
A college student who was born deaf. She's attracted to Itsuomi, who wasn't weirded out the first time they met.



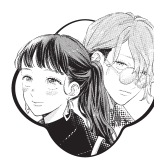
Rin-chan
A friend of Yuki's and a member of the same club as Itsuomi. She's crushing on Kyouya.



Oushi
A childhood friend of Yuki's. He can use sign language and somehow always ends up giving her a hard time.



Kyouya
Itsuomi's cousin and owner of the café where Itsuomi works part time.



Emma & Shin
Classmates of Itsuomi from high school.

STORY

Yuki is a college student who was born deaf. One day, a classmate named Itsuomi helped her out of an awkward situation, and she was immediately fascinated with him. Eventually, Yuki realized that her fascination was really love, which she decided to pursue in earnest. Itsuomi asked her to be his girlfriend, and the two started going out. Right away, he introduced her to his best friends, and Yuki started to feel just how much she meant to him.

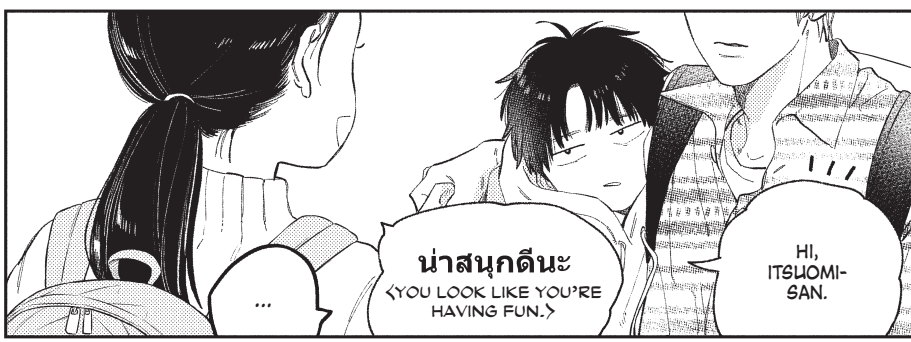

A SIGN OF
AFFECTION

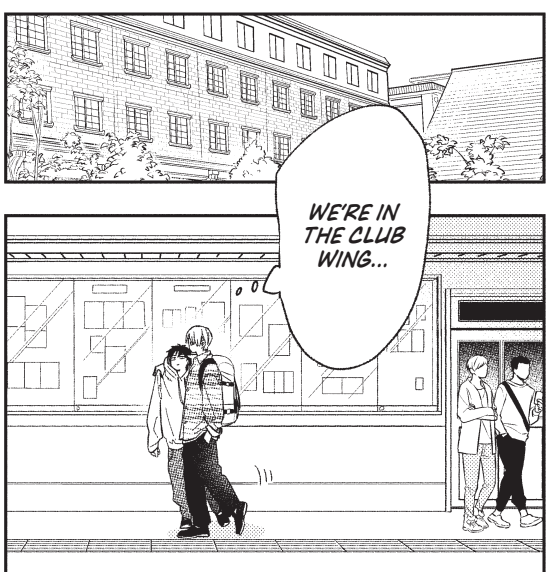

ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?!
HEY!
YOOU DUMB JERRK!!
DAMN IT! GET YER HANDS OFFA MEEEEE!
ざわ MURMUR
ざわ MURMUR
ズリ DRAG
ズリズリ... DRAG


!
!!
ざわ
MURMUR
ざわ
MURMUR
HEY. ISN'T THAT OUSHI?
WHAT'S HE DOING?
HUH, YOU'RE RIGHT.
<HEY! ITSUOMI!>
YOU THINK HE'S OKAY?
...I HOPE SO.


〈I FINALLY REMEMBERED THE NAME OF THAT SONG I'D FORGOTTEN YESTERDAY!〉
〈IT WAS DRIVING ME CRAZY, SO I GAVE UP AND WENT TO BED. BUT WHEN I WOKE UP, I SUDDENLY REMEMBERED IT!〉
Hahaha...
〈GOOD FOR YOU. SO WHAT WAS IT CALLED?〉
〈UH... "ANATA WO OMOTTEIRU."〉
〈HUH. I DON'T REALLY FOLLOW THE JAPANESE MUSIC SCENE MUCH NOW, SO I HAVEN'T HEARD OF IT.〉

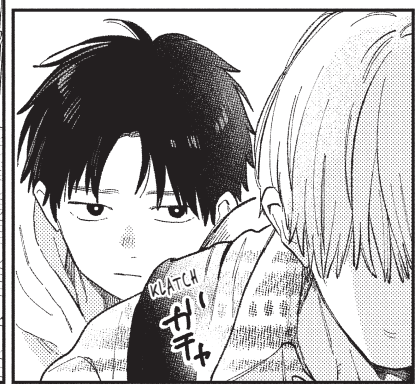

ESTOY INTENTANDO CONOCER MEJOR A ESTE CHICO.
<I'M HOPING TO GET TO KNOW THIS GUY A LITTLE BETTER.>
¿QUÉ TE CUENTAS?
<WHAT'RE YOU UP TO?>
ITSU!

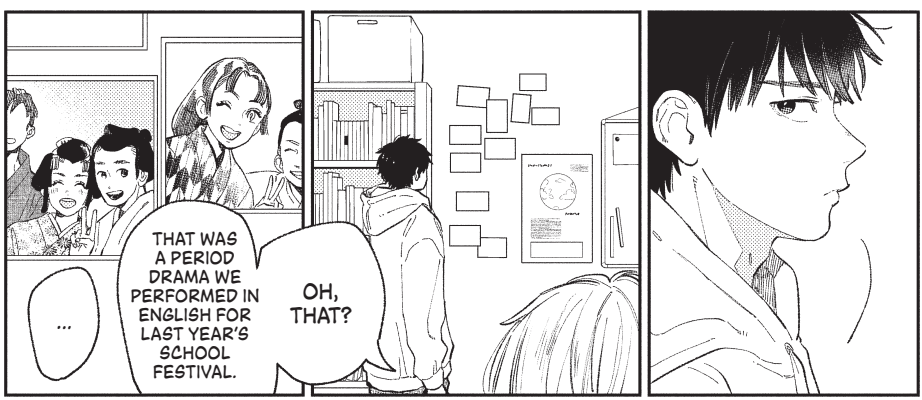

...
น่าสนุกดีนะ
<YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE HAVING FUN.>
HI, ITSUOMI-SAN.


WE'RE IN THE CLUB WING...


เพื่อนเพียบเลย
<YOU HAVE SO MANY FRIENDS!>
แล้วเจอกันน้า
<SEE YOU LATER.>


PHEW.
THUD
...


International Club
KLATCH

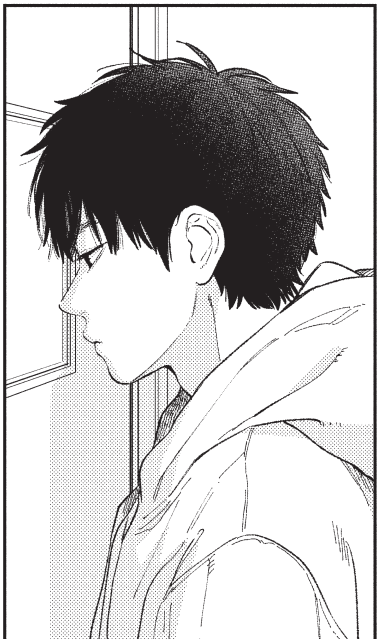

...
THAT WAS A PERIOD DRAMA WE PERFORMED IN ENGLISH FOR LAST YEAR'S SCHOOL FESTIVAL.
OH, THAT?


OUSHI. TELL ME.
...
SO, WHAT WAS IT YOU HAD TO DRAG ME HERE TO TALK ABOUT?


WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE THING FROM KOMUGI?
KO MU GI
小麦
※: A popular bakery right by the college
K...
KOMUGI ...?
ME, I LIKE THEIR CURRY BUNS.
I'M A THIRD-YEAR IN THE INTERNATIONAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT. MY SEMINAR'S ABOUT DEVELOPING NATIONS IN ASIA.
Oh.
OH, GIVE IT A REST!
WHAT'S YOUR MAJOR? GOT A FAVORITE CLASS?
YOU PART OF ANY CLUBS?
OR DO ANY ACTIVITIES?
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
THEN WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE AT THE DINING HALL?
WHY SHOULD I HAVE TO TELL YOU MY TASTE IN BAKED GOODS?!

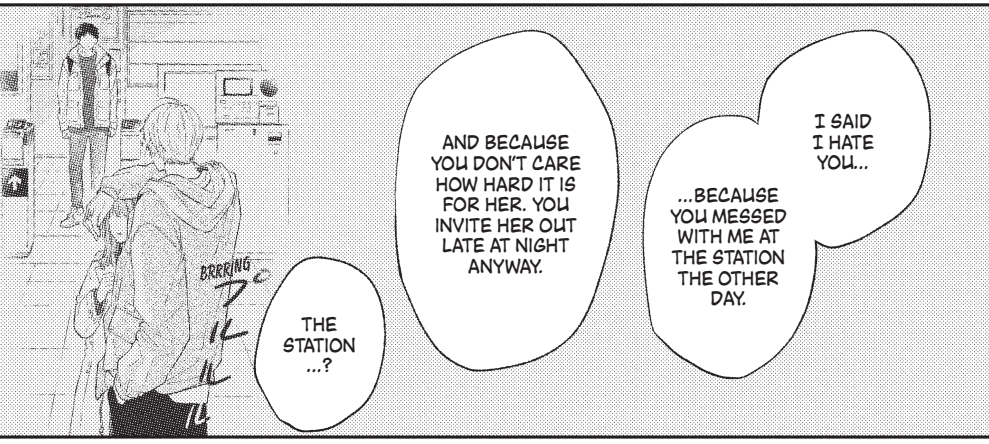

WHAT DON'T YOU LIKE ABOUT ME?
PERK
HUH?
I HATE YOUR GUTS, ALL RIGHT?
I HAVE NO INTENTION OF ANSWERING YOUR LITTLE ICEBREAKERS.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO DO, BUT IT'S CREEPING ME OUT.
TELL ME. WHAT DO YOU HATE ABOUT ME, AND WHY?
ARE YOU MESSED UP IN THE HEAD?!
FORGET THIS. I'VE GOT STUFF TO DO.
AWWW, COME ON.
ALL I KNOW ABOUT YOU IS YOUR NAME.


WELL, THAT AND...
...THAT YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH YUKI.

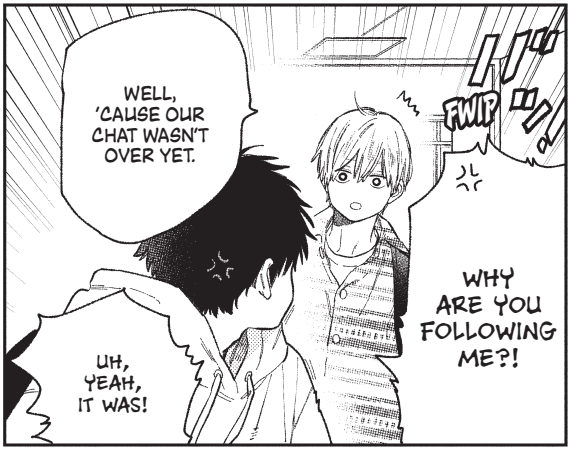





...
YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING.

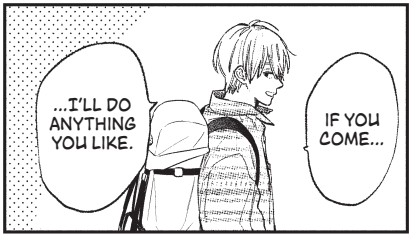

I SAID I HATE YOU...
...BECAUSE YOU MESSED WITH ME AT THE STATION THE OTHER DAY.
AND BECAUSE YOU DON'T CARE HOW HARD IT IS FOR HER. YOU INVITE HER OUT LATE AT NIGHT ANYWAY.
THE STATION ...?
BRRRING


OH, YEAH...
I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG YOU PLAN TO STAY IN JAPAN, BUT...
...PEOPLE HERE THINK TATTOOS ARE SKETCHY.
WE DON'T LOVE PEOPLE BLEACHING THEIR HAIR OVER AND OVER, EITHER.
ANYWAY, YOU JUST SEEM SHADY.
THAT'S ALL.
パタン
BTAM


WELL, 'CAUSE OUR CHAT WASN'T OVER YET.
FWIP
WHY ARE YOU FOLLOWING ME?!
UH, YEAH, IT WAS!




ONLY BECAUSE OF YOU!
WOW, YOUR MOOD SWINGS ARE REALLY SOMETHING.
AND EVEN IF IT WEREN'T, WHAT'S THE POINT? IT'S LIKE TALKING TO A BRICK WALL!


...I'LL DO ANYTHING YOU LIKE.
IF YOU COME...


...
ANY-THING...


MEET ME AT THE MORIMACHI BUS STOP AT 7 TONIGHT.
HEY, I GOT IT.
WHAT?!

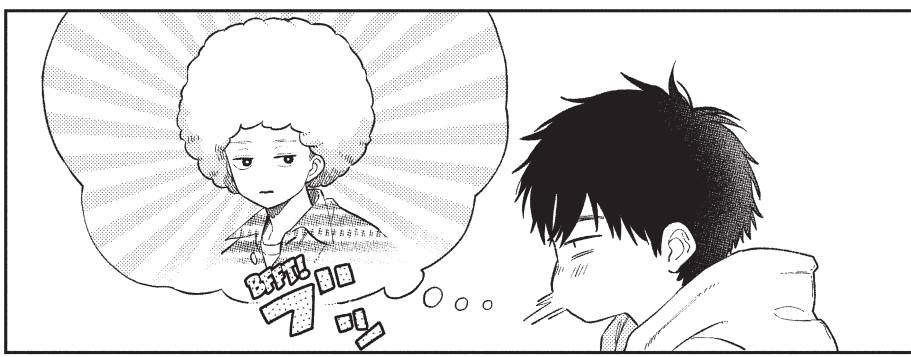

HEY.
JUST NOW, I WENT FROM HATING YOU TO DESPISING YOU.
YOUR EYES LOOK LIKE A DOG THAT CAN'T TRUST PEOPLE ANYMORE.
GUESS WE'LL NEED EVEN MORE TIME, THEN.
WHAT?!

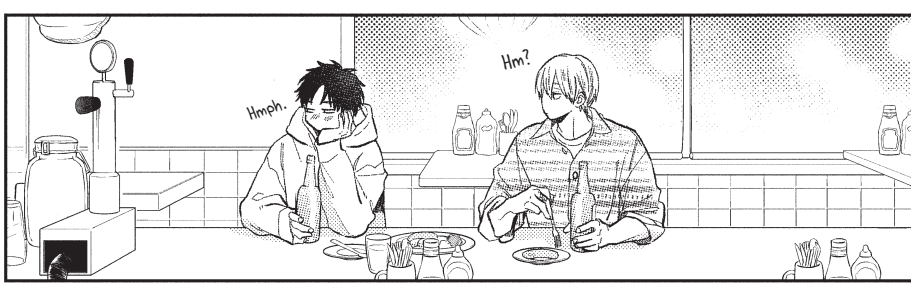

ROCKIN' ROBIN
OH, BUT NO SEXUAL STUFF, OKAY?
ヒョコ YOINK
DON'T BE STUPID! I'M NOT EVEN GOING!
はぁ HRMPH
...
I'LL HAVE A BEER. OUSHI, CAN YOU DRINK YET?
YES, BUT I'M NOT DRINKING WITH YOU!
I'VE GOT ANOTHER BAD FEELING.
HIS NAME'S OUSHI. AN OLD FRIEND OF YUKI'S. HE'S A LITTLE DISTRUSTFUL OF HUMANS.
WHAT THE HELL'S THAT MEAN?
THANKS FOR DROPPING BY.
I WORK HERE PART TIME.
THIS GUY'S MY COUSIN.
YOU GO TO ITSU'S SCHOOL?


CLACK
HERE YOU GO, ITSU.
SHWPOP
シュポッ
...I'LL HAVE A BEER, TOO.
AH!
...
I HAD MY FIRST BEER THERE, TOO, ON MY 16TH BIRTHDAY. IN GERMANY, IT WAS OKAY 'CAUSE I WAS WITH MY PARENTS.
WHERE I GREW UP. FROM ELEMENTARY TO PART OF HIGH SCHOOL.
GER-MANY?
?
THEY DON'T REALLY USE THEM IN GERMANY.
THE HECK? YOU TOO COOL FOR BOTTLE OPENERS?

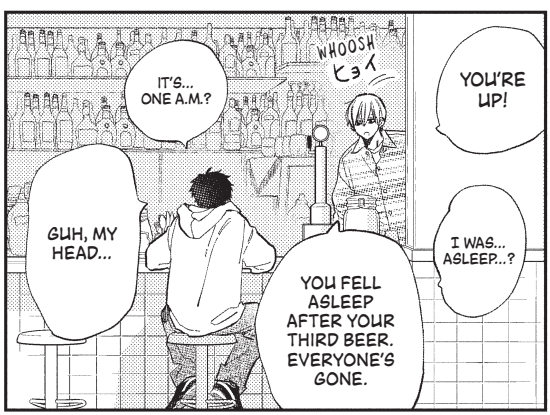

Haaah.
GOOD STUFF...
CHUG
...
ゴクゴク
CHUG
CHUG
CHUG
CHUG
JAPANESE, GERMAN, AND ENGLISH.
THREE?
Weren't you speaking other ones earlier?
WELL.
HUH.
CHEW
モグ
DON'T DRINK ON AN EMPTY STOMACH.
HERE, THESE ARE PRETTY GOOD.
HOLD UP, I'LL GET US SOME WATER, TOO.
SO, LIKE, HOW MANY LANGUAGES CAN YOU SPEAK?
...
YOU'RE PROBABLY THINKING THERE'S NO WAY...
...A GUY LIKE ME IS ACTUALLY LEARNING SIGN LANGUAGE, RIGHT?

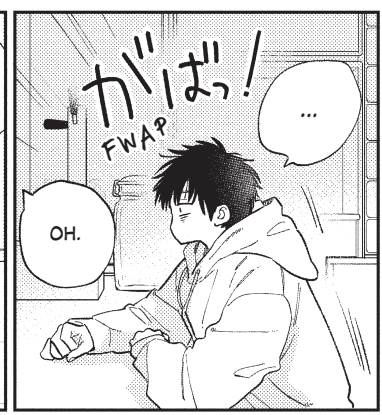

YOU SAID SOMETHING ABOUT MY HAIR, RIGHT?
IT'S 'CAUSE A FRIEND OF MINE IS A HARDRESSER. I'M A HAIRSTYLE GUINEA PIG.
NEXT TIME YOU SEE ME, I MIGHT HAVE AN AFRO.
...
OH, YEAH.
WE BOTH STARTED FOR THE SAME REASON, RIGHT?
HUH?!
...
I'M NOT LIKE YOU, CREEP.

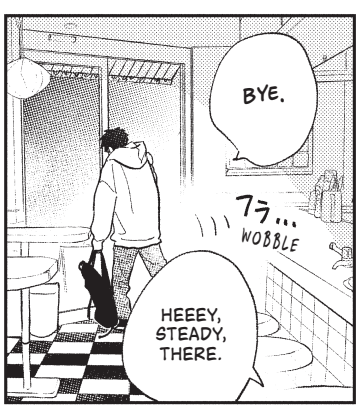

Bff!!
7_0


Hmph.
Hm?




WHOOSH
ヒョイ
IT'S... ONE A.M.?
YOU'RE UP!
GUH, MY HEAD...
I WAS... ASLEEP...?
YOU FELL ASLEEP AFTER YOUR THIRD BEER. EVERYONE'S GONE.


ガバっ！
FWAP
...
OH.


BYE.
フラ...
WOBBLE
HEEEY, STEADY, THERE.

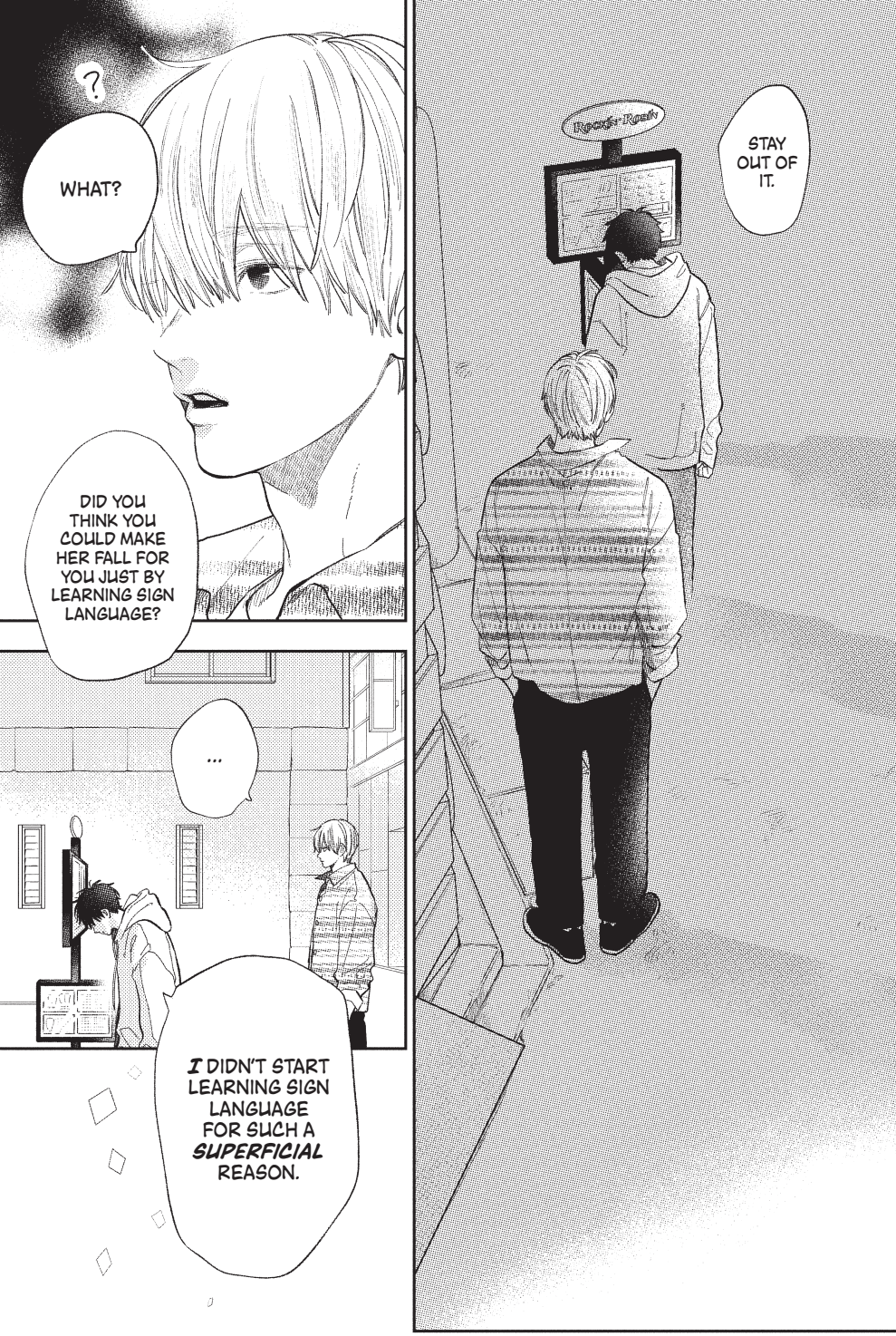

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
I DIDN'T... PAY THE BILL YET.
YOU GOTTA PUKE?


OUSHI.
HOLD ON A SECOND.
Ryoujo Ryuichi
BONK
WOBBLE
YOU'RE WOBBLING. I DON'T WANNA SEE YOUR NAME ON THE NEWS TOMORROW.
AWWW. SEE?


STAY...
...AWAY.


OUSHIII...

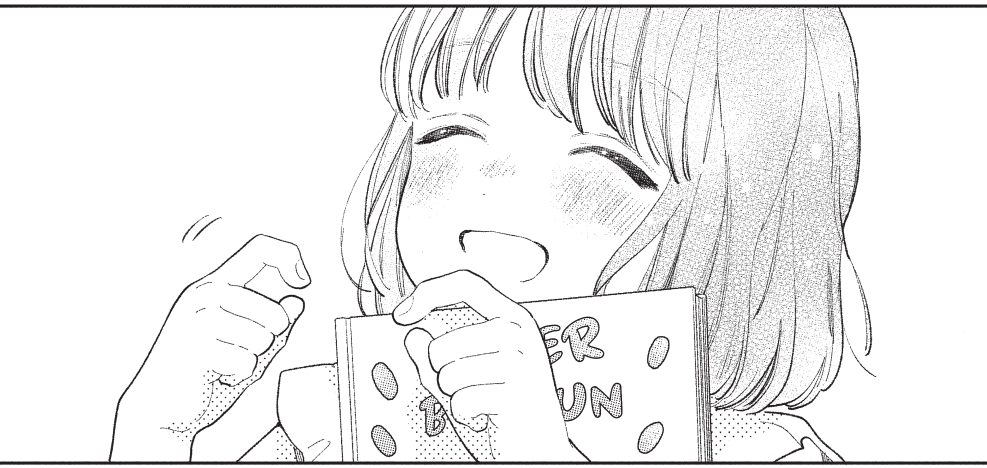

HELLOOO?

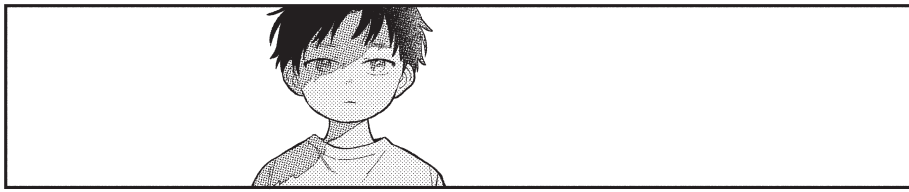

?
WHAT?
DID YOU THINK YOU COULD MAKE HER FALL FOR YOU JUST BY LEARNING SIGN LANGUAGE?
...
I DIDN'T START LEARNING SIGN LANGUAGE FOR SUCH A SUPERFICIAL REASON.
Rack-Rack
STAY OUT OF IT.

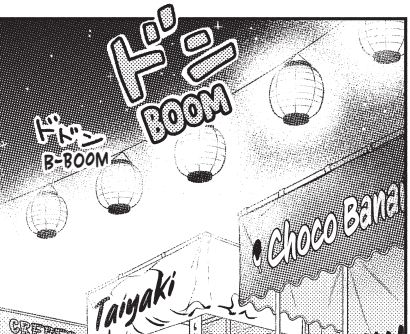

BUZZZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ
WHY DO WE GOTTA GO TO DANCE PRACTICE EVERY DAY WHEN IT'S SUMMER VACATION?
BUZZZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ
WELL? WHY?
I TOLD YOU. THEY SAID THAT IF ALL THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS DANCE AT THE FESTIVAL, THEY'LL GIVE US CANDY.
BUZZZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ
WHATEVER. I BET IT'LL BE SUCKY CANDY.
STOP IT! IT'S TOO HOT OUT HERE FOR YOU TO BE THIS ANNOYING.
HEY, A CICADA! I WISH I'D BROUGHT MY NET.
BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ
Ah!
IT'S YUKI-CHAN!
She came again too!
WHO?
SHE'S YOUR AGE, OUSHI.
SO? I'VE NEVER SEEN HER BEFORE.
BUZZZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ
SHE GOES TO A DEAF SCHOOL.
DEF-SCHOOL?


Hello!

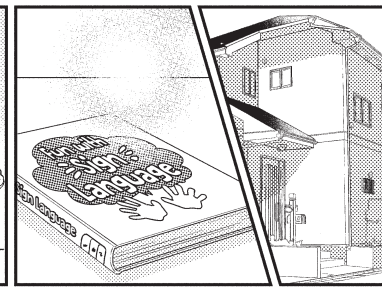

WAIT RIGHT HERE.
YUKI-CHAN CAN'T HEAR.
TMP TMP
たたっ



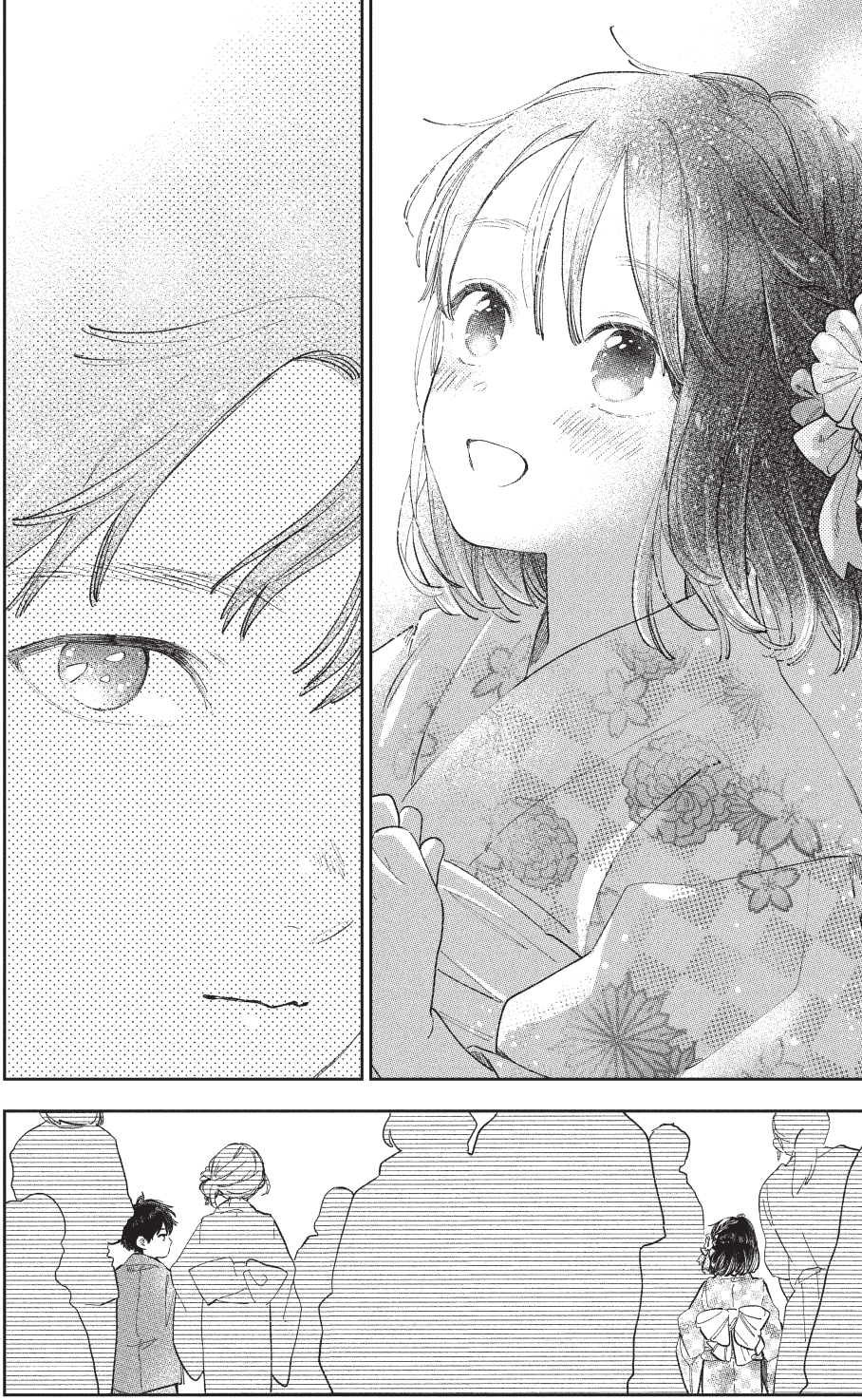


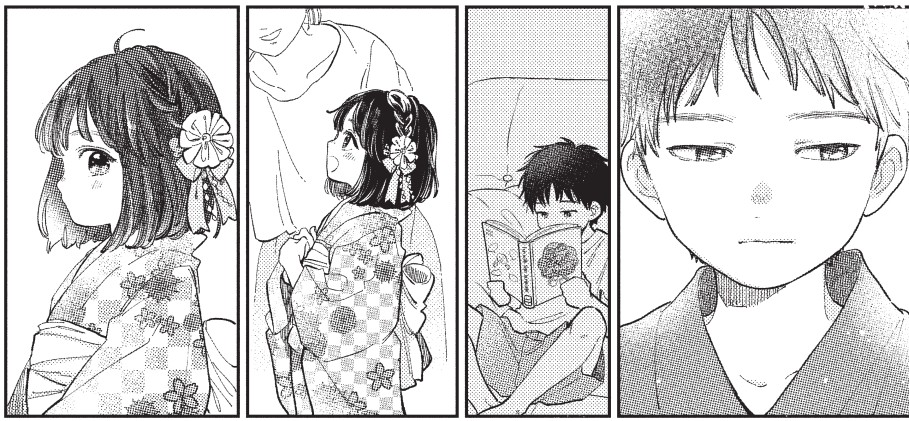

ドニ
BOOM
ドニ
B-BOOM
Choco Banana
Taiyaki

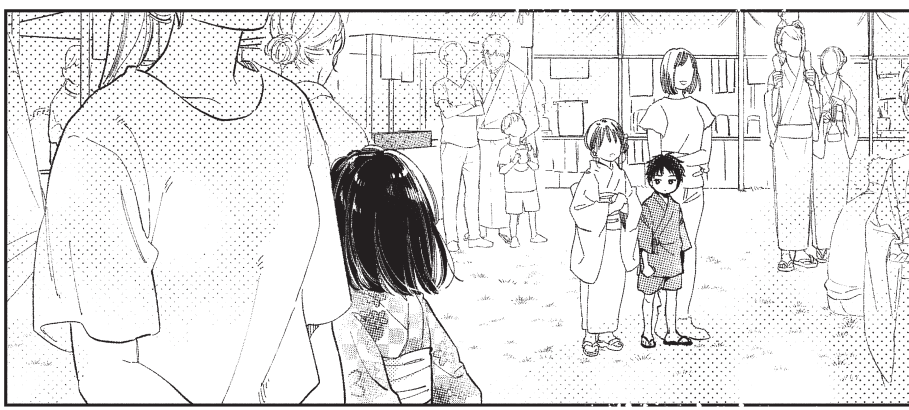


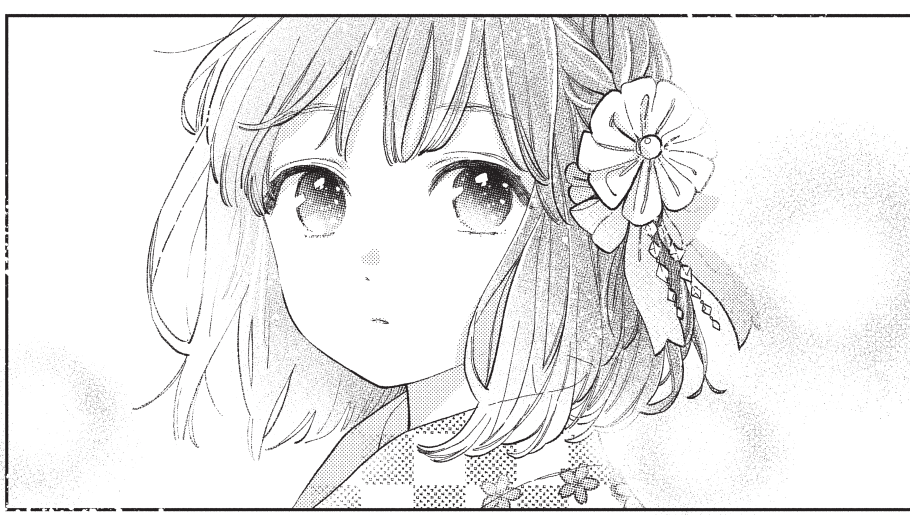


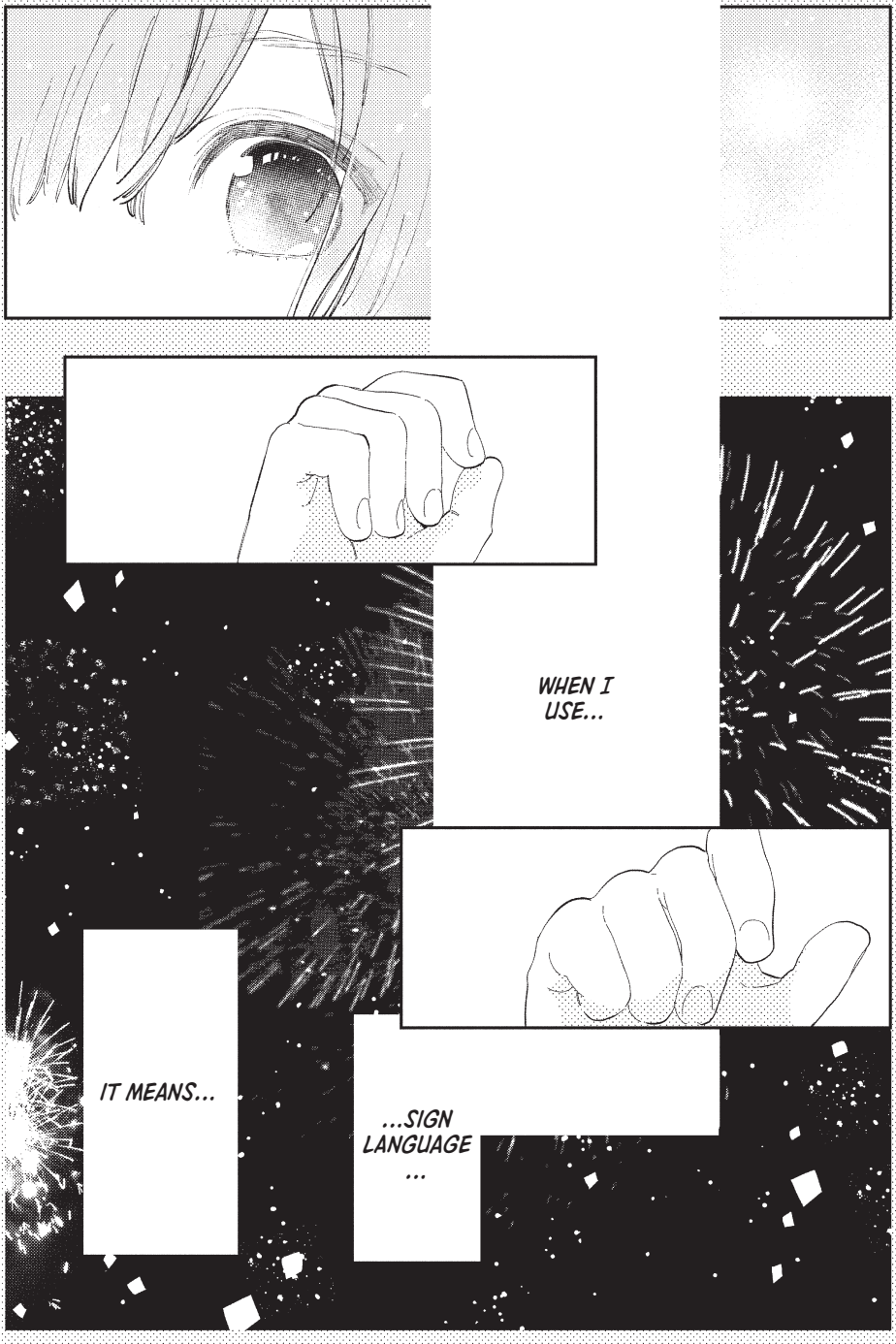

ヒューーールルル…
NOOOOOOM
ドォン
KA-BOOM
B-BOOM
SOOO PREEETTY!
BOOM
トーン
BOOM
トォーン
ビー
B-BOOM
FIRE-WORKS ARE SO SMOKY AND LOUD.
POP
ヒューーールルル…
NOOOOOOM
BOOM
ドン
HUH? WHAJYA SAY?
Woooooo…
やきとり
ヒューーールルル…
NOOOOOOM
BOOM
ドン
POP



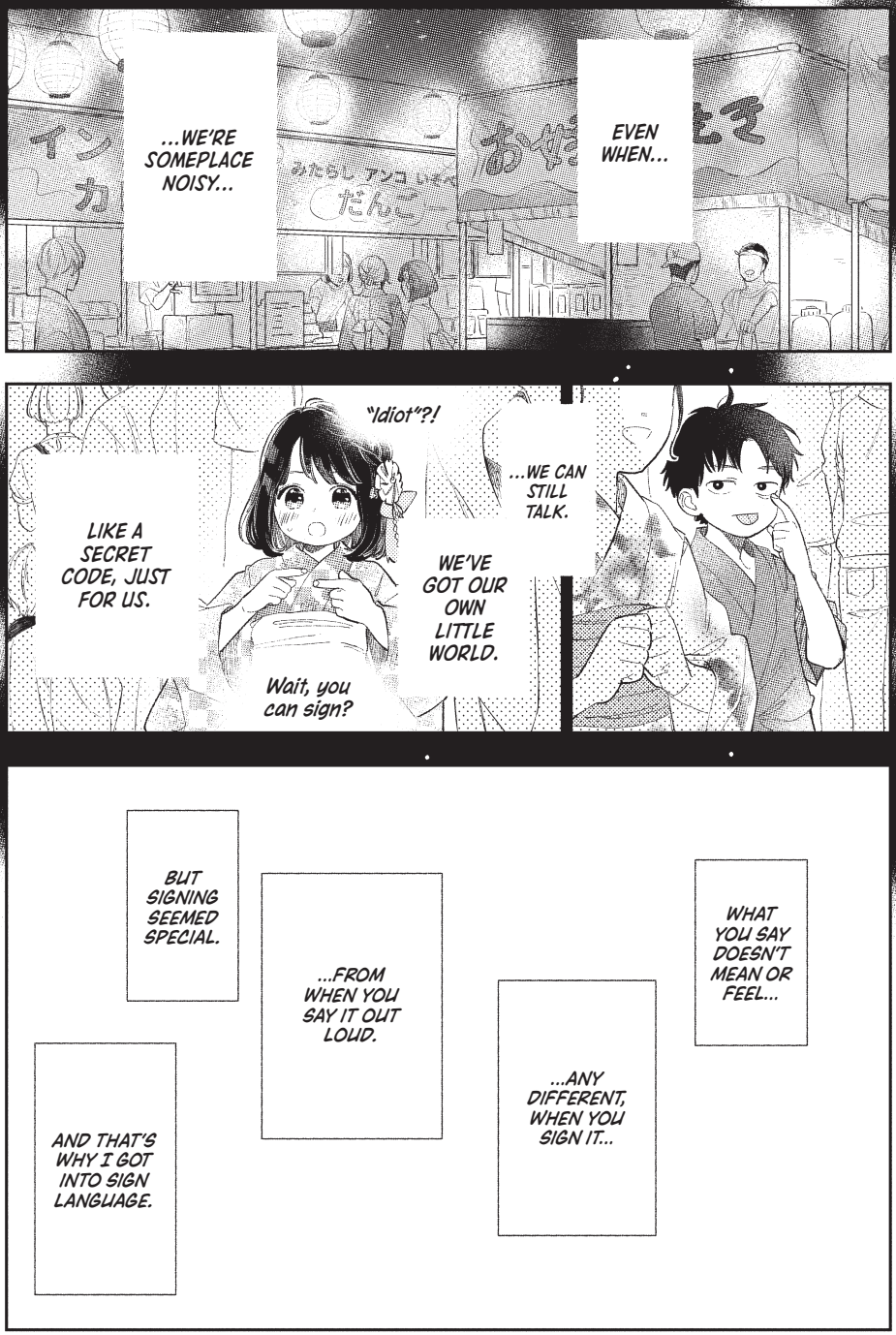




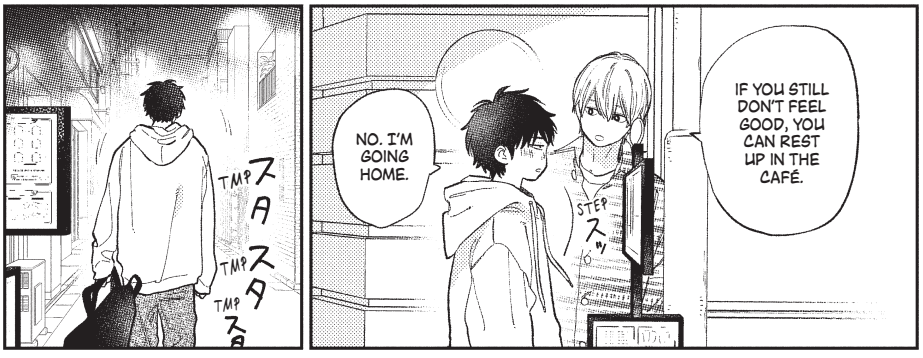



WHEN I USE...
IT MEANS...
...SIGN LANGUAGE...


...SHE'S GOT TO...
...LOOK AT ME.


...WE'RE SOMEPLACE NOISY...
EVEN WHEN...
"Idiot"?!
...WE CAN STILL TALK.
LIKE A SECRET CODE, JUST FOR US.
WE'VE GOT OUR OWN LITTLE WORLD.
Wait, you can sign?
BUT SIGNING SEEMED SPECIAL.
...FROM WHEN YOU SAY IT OUT LOUD.
WHAT YOU SAY DOESN'T MEAN OR FEEL...
...ANY DIFFERENT, WHEN YOU SIGN IT...
AND THAT'S WHY I GOT INTO SIGN LANGUAGE.


?
HEY, YOU OKAY?

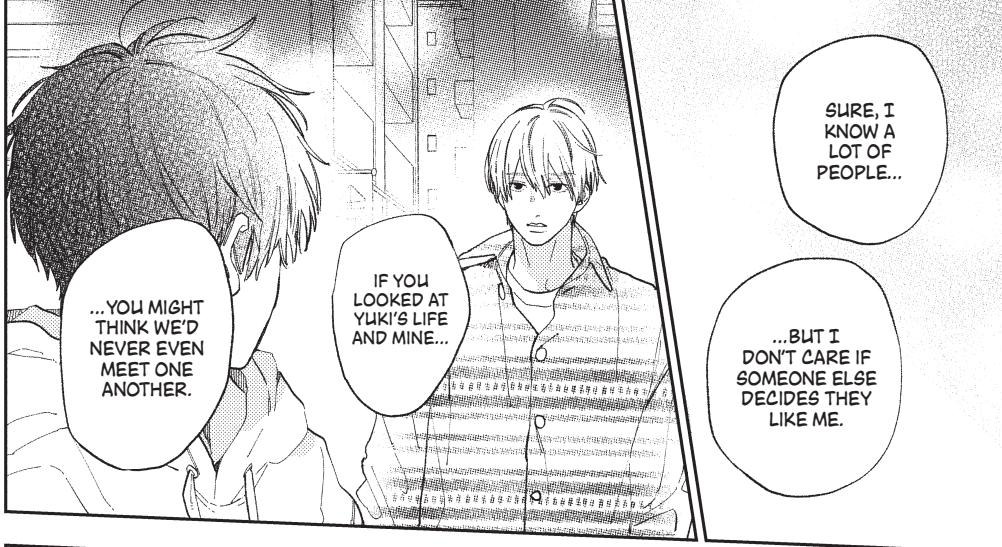

TMP スタスタスタ
NO. I'M GOING HOME.
STEP スッ
IF YOU STILL DON'T FEEL GOOD, YOU CAN REST UP IN THE CAFÉ.

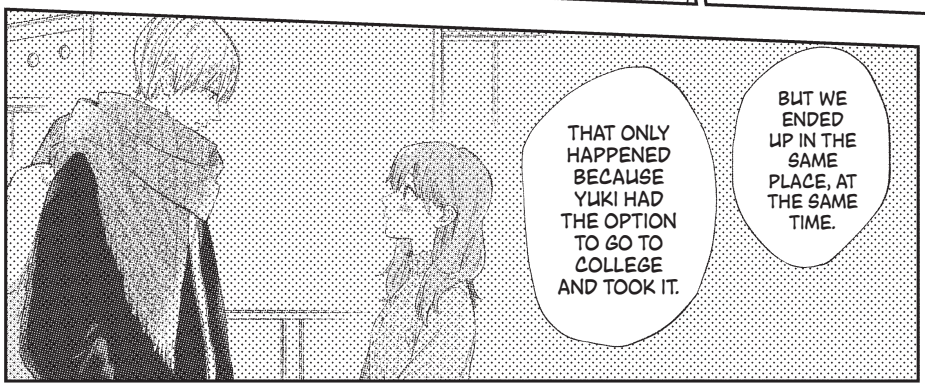

DON'T SEE YUKI...
...ANY-MORE.


...
YOU PROMISED TO DO ANYTHING I SAID.
GUESS YOU'RE FEELING BETTER.
WHAT?


PAUSE
I ALMOST FORGOT.


...
THAT'S NOT SOMETHING I CAN DO BY MYSELF.
YOU SOUND AWFUL SURE, YOU COCKY BASTARD.
THAT'S NOT IT. IT'S 'CAUSE WE'RE MAKING SOMETHING TOGETHER.
WE'RE BUILDING A RELATION-SHIP OF TRUST.
AND YUKI WOULDN'T WANT THAT.
...YOU'RE A COOL GUY. YOU COULD GO OUT WITH LOTS OF OTHER GIRLS.
YOU CAN SPEAK ALL THOSE LAN-GUAGES.
YOU PROBABLY MEET EVEN MORE PEOPLE ON YOUR TRIPS OVERSEAS.
I WANT TO SHOW HER WITH MY ACTIONS.
YUKI CAN'T HEAR, BUT SHE'S PLENTY PERCEP-TIVE.
...
ESPECIALLY SINCE I TRAVEL SO MUCH.
LOOK. THERE ARE TIMES WHEN WE'RE FAR APART.


SURE, I KNOW A LOT OF PEOPLE...
...BUT I DON'T CARE IF SOMEONE ELSE DECIDES THEY LIKE ME.
IF YOU LOOKED AT YUKI'S LIFE AND MINE...
...YOU MIGHT THINK WE'D NEVER EVEN MEET ONE ANOTHER.


BUT WE ENDED UP IN THE SAME PLACE, AT THE SAME TIME.
THAT ONLY HAPPENED BECAUSE YUKI HAD THE OPTION TO GO TO COLLEGE AND TOOK IT.


IT JUST MAKES ME THINK, "WOW. LUCKY ME."
GRR
...
SHE'S 19 AND I'M 22. WE COULDN'T POSSIBLY HAVE MET ANY EARLIER IN OUR LIVES.
OF COURSE, EVEN IF IT WASN'T AT COLLEGE...
...WE MIGHT STILL HAVE MET SOMEWHERE ELSE, YEARS LATER...
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?


NO MATTER WHERE OR WHEN WE MET...
...I'D STILL THINK YUKI WAS COOL...
...AND DECIDE TO BE WITH HER.


THUP
THUP
THUP
...
WHUMF
THESE FEEL-INGS...
I NEVER WANTED...

SO DON'T COME ALONG AND FIX THEM IN COARSE WORDS...

...THAT A MILLION OTHER PEOPLE HAVE SAID BEFORE.

AAARGH. DAMN IT.



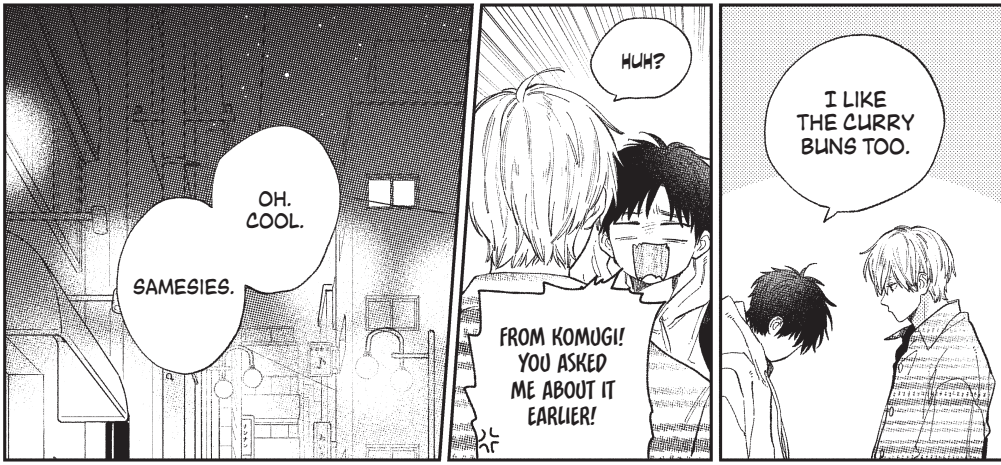
...TO PUT A LABEL ON THEM.

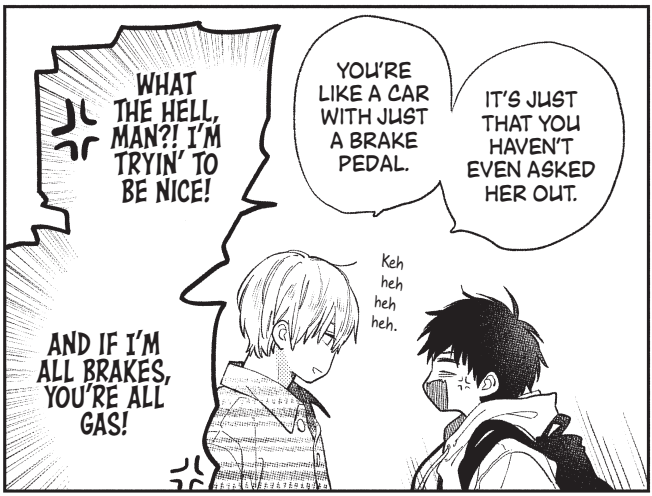
I JUST DON'T WANT YOU LOOKING...

I DON'T WANT YOU TO LOOK.

...AT ANOTHER GUY'S HANDS.

I LIKE...


OH. COOL.
SAMESIES.
HUH?
FROM KOMUGI! YOU ASKED ME ABOUT IT EARLIER!
I LIKE THE CURRY BUNS TOO.


WHAT THE HELL, MAN?! I'M TRYIN' TO BE NICE!
YOU'RE LIKE A CAR WITH JUST A BRAKE PEDAL.
IT'S JUST THAT YOU HAVEN'T EVEN ASKED HER OUT.
Keh heh heh heh.
AND IF I'M ALL BRAKES, YOU'RE ALL GAS!

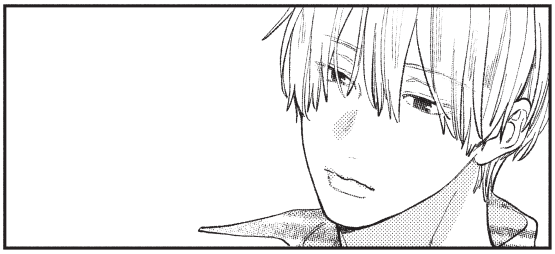

EVEN ASSUMING YOU *ARE* SERIOUS ABOUT DATING YUKI...
...IT'S NOT GOING TO BE AS EASY AS YOU THINK.
KEH HEH HEH.
DID I SAY SOME-THING FUNNY?

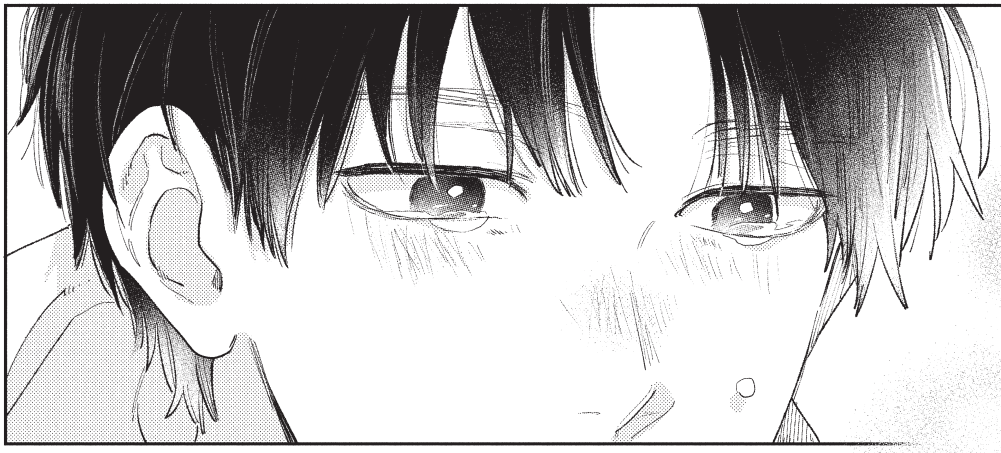



I DON'T LIKE...
...STEALING A GIRL WHEN SHE'S ALREADY GOING OUT WITH SOMEONE.
SO JUST END IT ALREADY.




HUH. I THOUGHT YOU'D BE WAY MORE UPTIGHT THAN THIS.
BUT YOU CAME OUT AND SAID IT PRETTY QUICK.

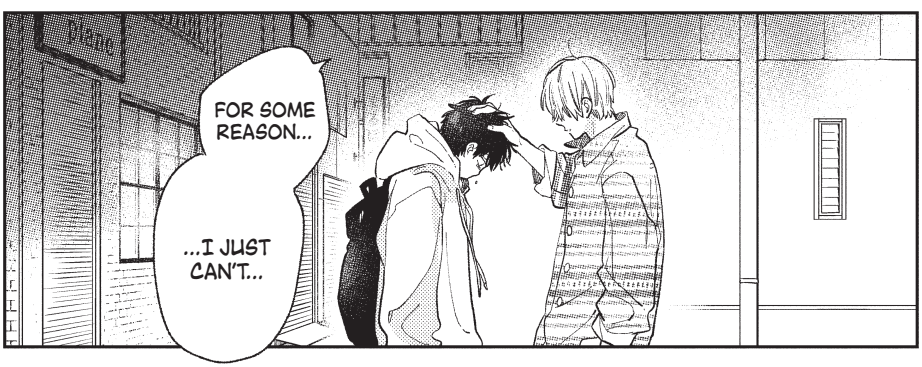


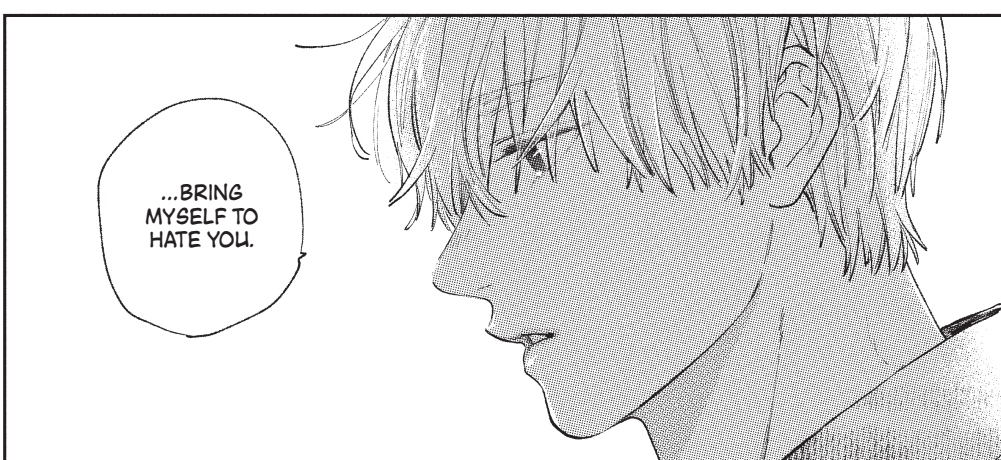



YOU'RE GETTING ALL MIXED UP.
IT'S LIKE EVERYTHING'S DISAPPEARING, AND THE LIFE'S DRAINING OUT OF ME.
DRIP
ぽた
DRIP
ぽた
WHOA, WHAT THE HELL?! WHY AM I CRYING?!


IT'S A...
...TERRIBLE FEELING...
BUT SOMEHOW...
...I ALSO FEEL...
...LIGHTER.
GRAB
!!!


RUB
くしゃ
くしゃ
RUB
わし
RUFFLE
わし
RUFFLE
わし
RUFFLE
...


FOR SOME REASON...
...I JUST CAN'T...


...BRING MYSELF TO HATE YOU.


I CAN'T JUST LET HIM DO THIS.
IF YOU EVER...
SLAP
BUT...
WHAT THE HECK? I DON'T HAVE THE ENERGY TO FIGHT BACK.
...DO ANYTHING TO MAKE HER CRY...
...THEN I WON'T CARE IF SHE ALREADY HAS A MAN.





CAN I CHANGE? HAVE I CHANGED?

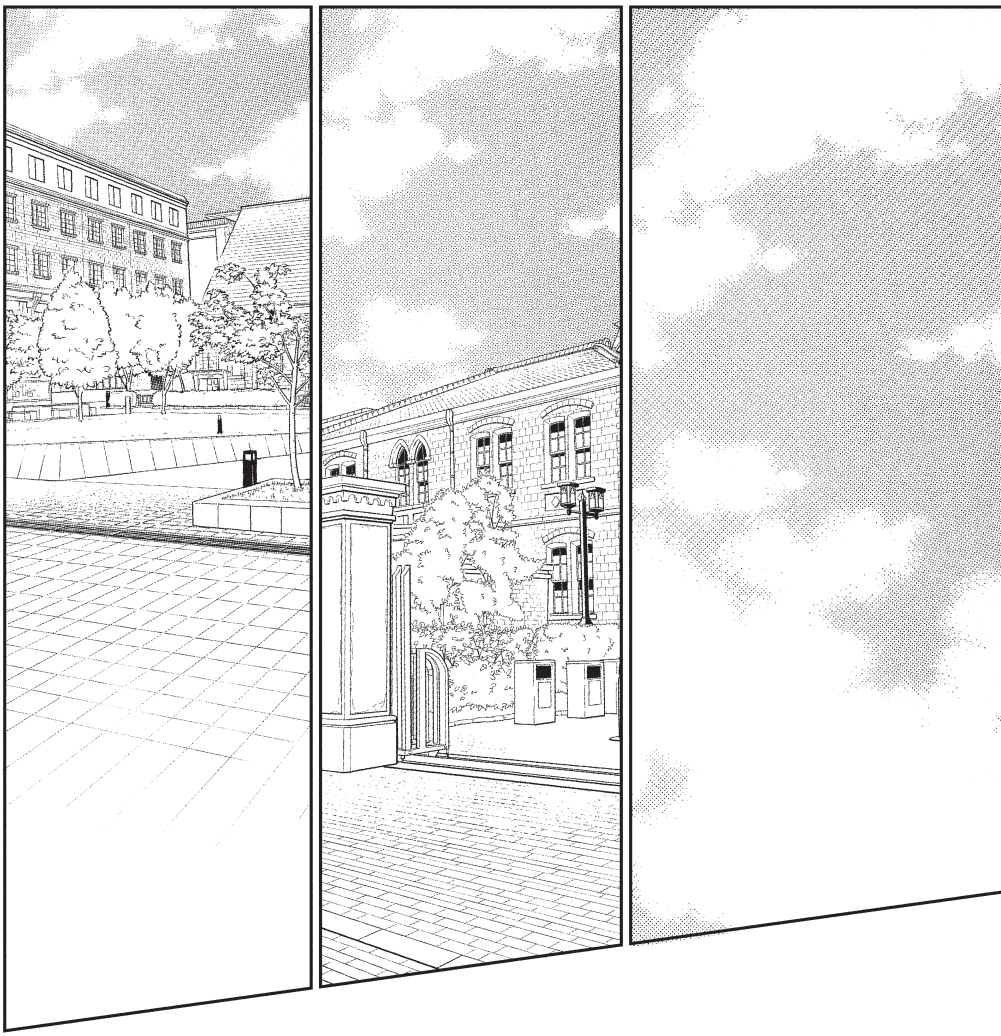
ALL I KNOW NOW IS...

...I CAN'T LET HIM GET AWAY WITH THIS.

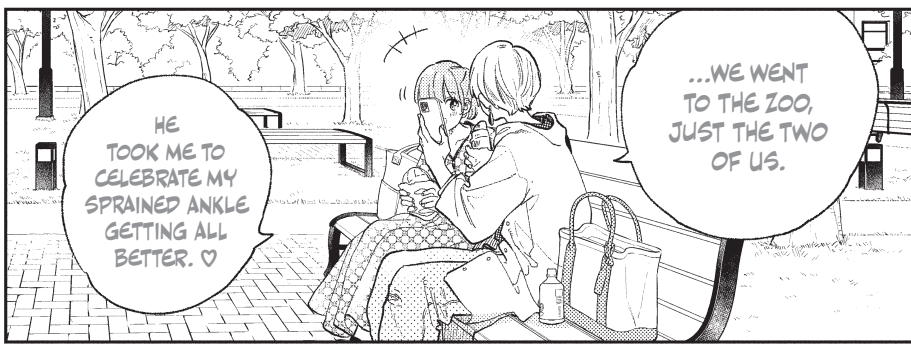


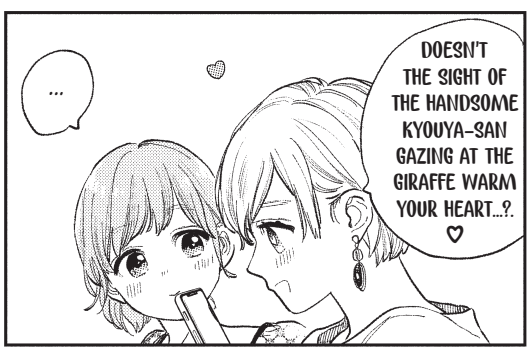
Sign.18

Vicissitudes



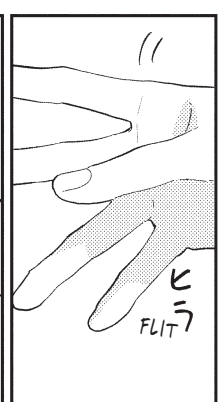

OH! AND THIS ONE'S FROM WHEN...


...WE WENT TO THE ZOO, JUST THE TWO OF US.
HE TOOK ME TO CELEBRATE MY SPRAINED ANKLE GETTING ALL BETTER. ♡


...
DOESN'T THE SIGHT OF THE HANDSOME KYOUYA-SAN GAZING AT THE GIRAFFE WARM YOUR HEART...?. ♡

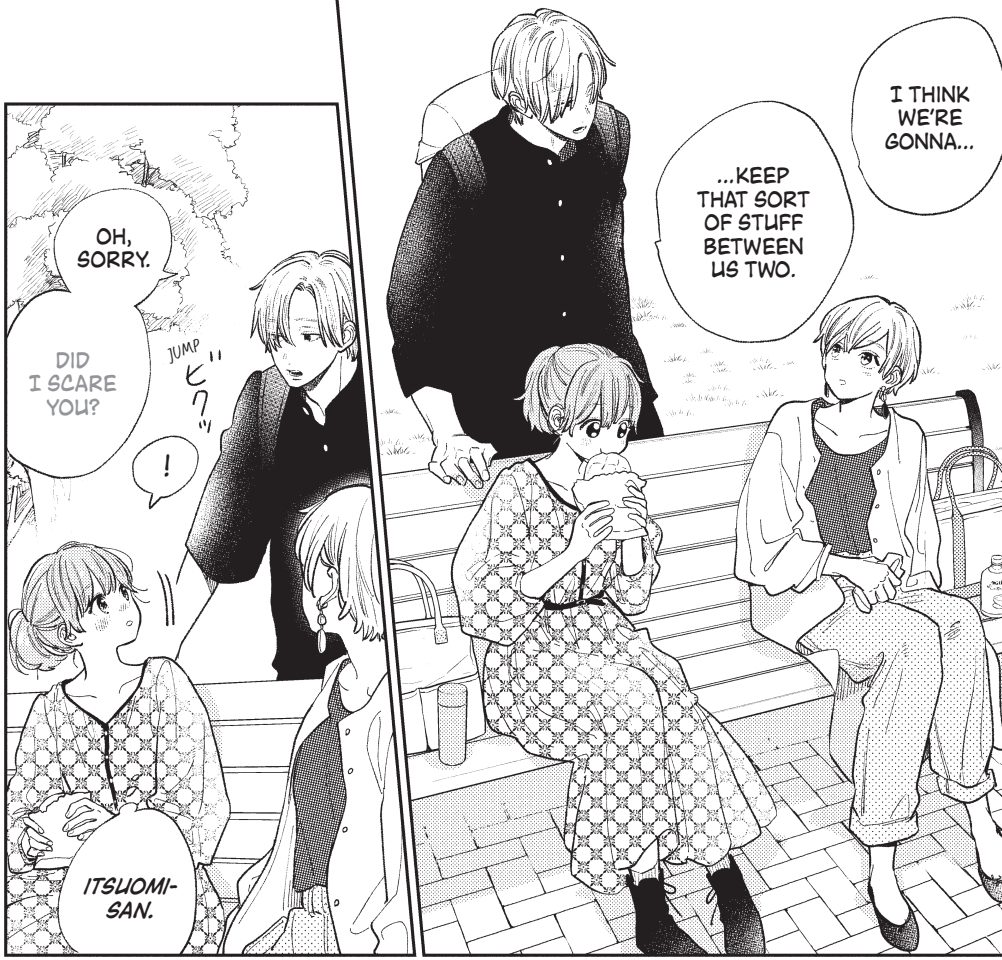

SIIIGH...

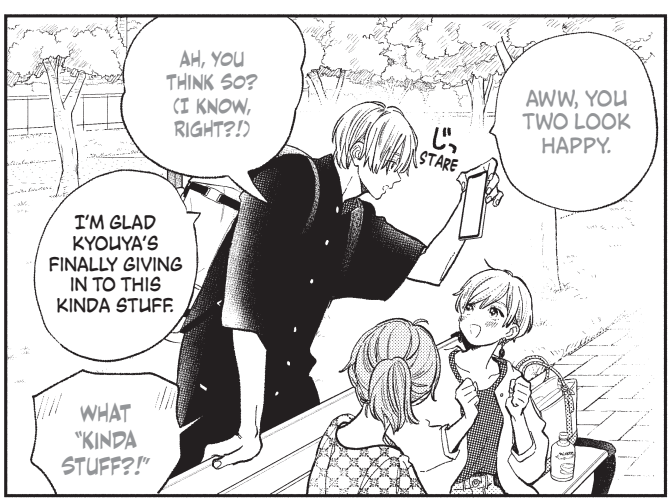

HM?

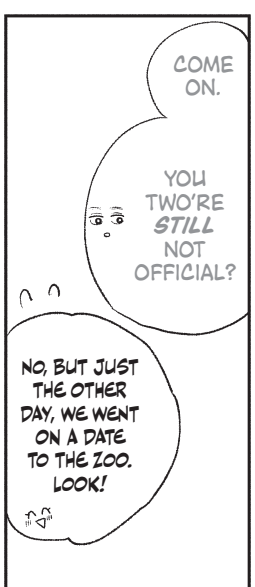

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FLIT

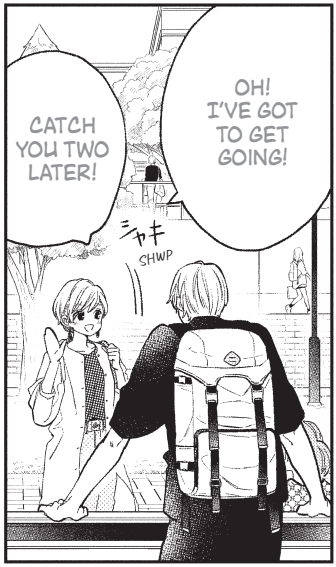

...
So does this mean the two of you are going out?
HUH? WELL, HE HASN'T OFFICIALLY ASKED ME OUT.
They say that grown men don't really put it in those terms anymore
SHOOP
I wonder if this means we're ALREADY a couple...
SHOOP
SHOOP
Arrgh! I don't know!
NEXT TIME I SEE HIM...
...DO YOU THINK I SHOULD ASK?
NO, I'M TOO SCARED!
SOB
SOB
WHAT IF HE TELLS ME, "OOPS, SORRY, NOT INTERESTED?!"
OR MAYBE IT'LL WORK OUT...
I'M SORRY, I'M ALL OVER THE PLACE!


DO YOU WANT TO GO OUT WITH ME?
...
WHAT DID ITSUOMI-SAN SAY WHEN HE ASKED YOU OUT?
Huh?
YUKI. I WANT YOU.


I THINK WE'RE GONNA...
...KEEP THAT SORT OF STUFF BETWEEN US TWO.
OH, SORRY.
DID I SCARE YOU?
JUMP
ビクッ
!
ITSUOMI-SAN.

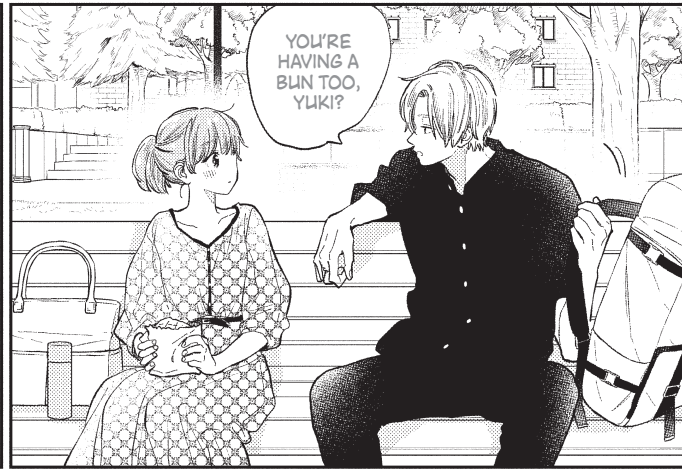

AWW, YOU TWO LOOK HAPPY.
じっ STARE
AH, YOU THINK SO? (I KNOW, RIGHT?!)
I'M GLAD KYOUYA'S FINALLY GIVING IN TO THIS KINDA STUFF.
WHAT "KINDA STUFF?!"


COME ON.
YOU TWO'RE STILL NOT OFFICIAL?
NO, BUT JUST THE OTHER DAY, WE WENT ON A DATE TO THE ZOO. LOOK!


OH! I'VE GOT TO GET GOING!
CATCH YOU TWO LATER!
シャキ
SHWP


Y'KNOW... LOVE?
EEEEK! SHEESH, ITSUOMI-SAN!
SWAT
SWAT

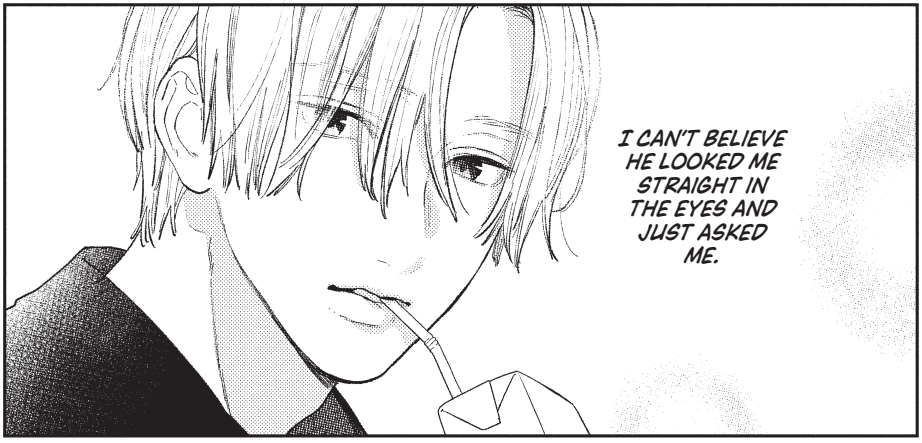

RIN-CHAN'S SO NICE TO LEAVE US ALONE...
NOW WE CAN HAVE LUNCH TOGETHER.

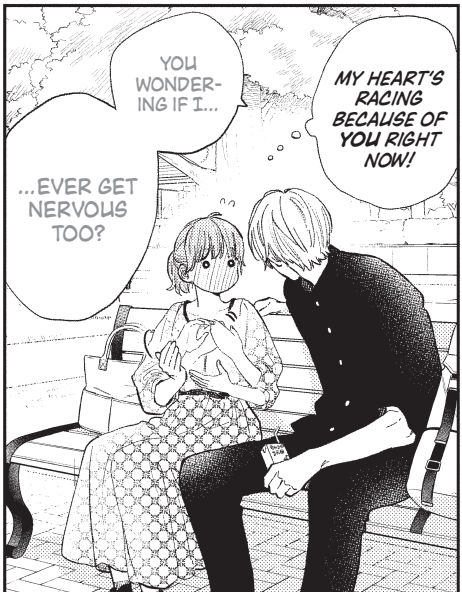

YOU'RE HAVING A BUN TOO, YUKI?


"Finally, huh?"

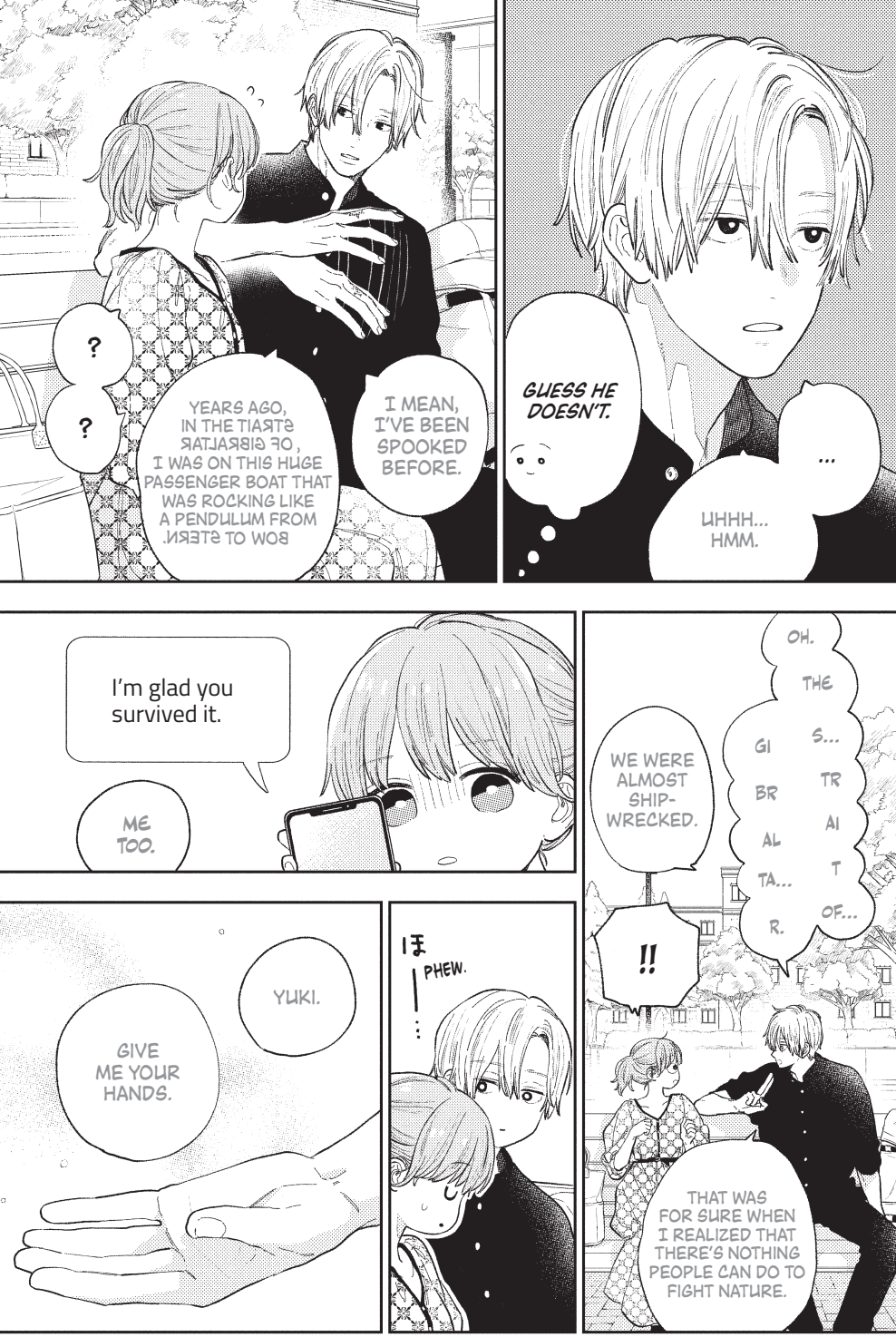

Actually, I have that part-time job interview after my next class.
HOW'S YOUR DAY BEEN?
BUSY AFTER-NOON?

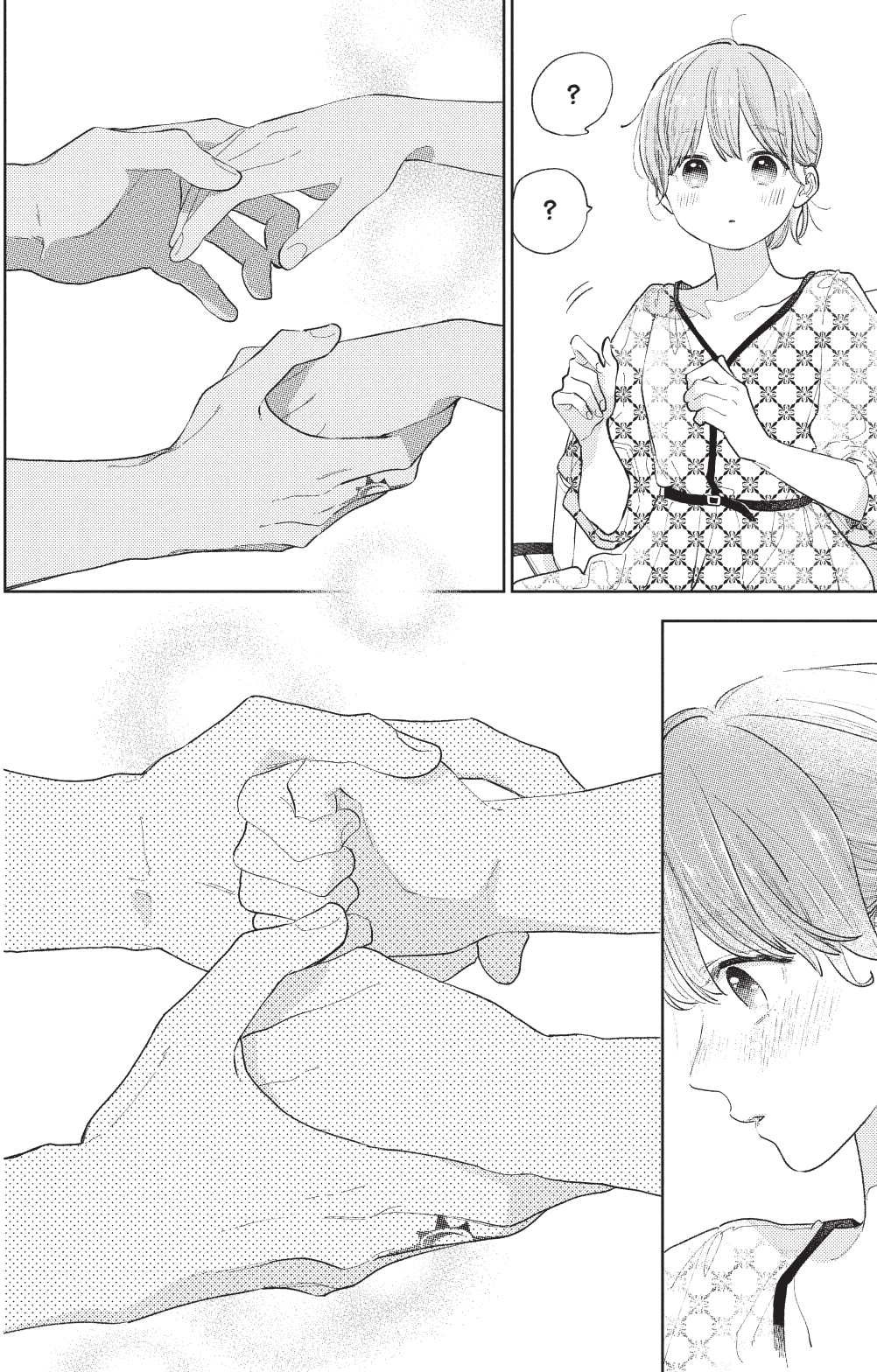

THINKING BACK TO WHEN HE ASKED ME OUT... IT'S GOT ME FEELING SELF-CONSCIOUS, SOMEHOW.
CHEW もぐ"
もぐ" CHEW
WAS IT BECAUSE HE WAS RAISED OVERSEAS?
OR IS IT JUST WHO HE IS?

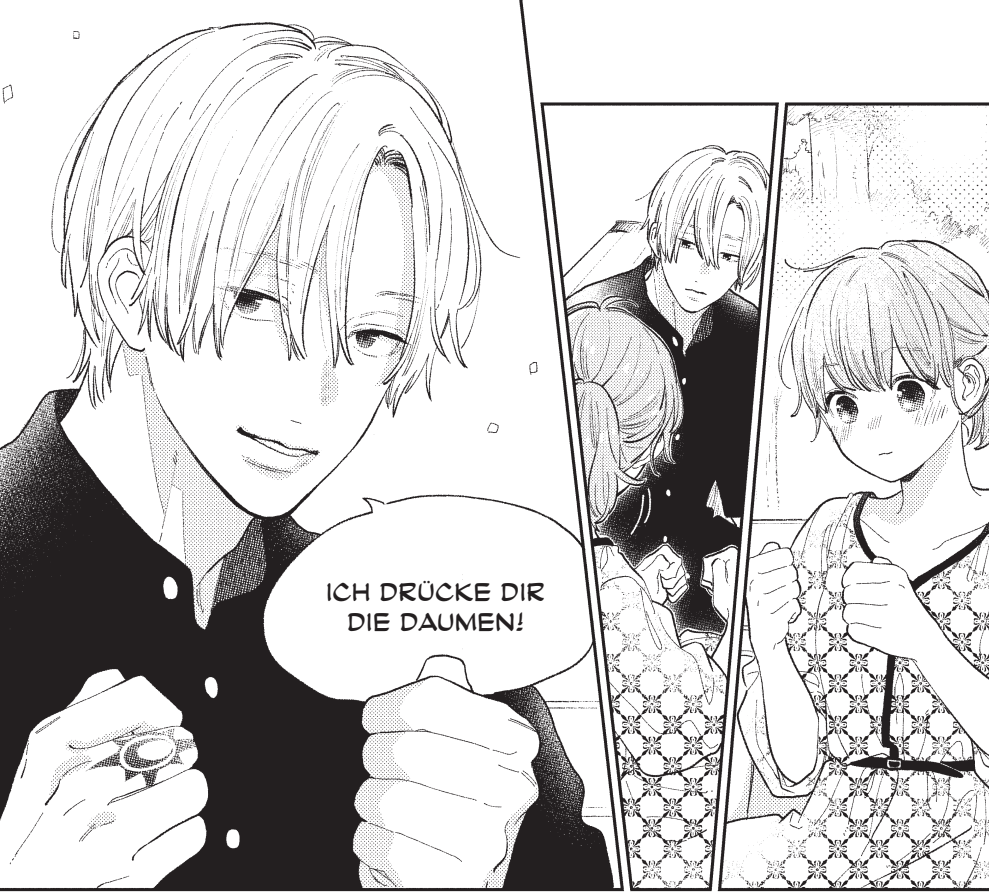

I CAN'T BELIEVE HE LOOKED ME STRAIGHT IN THE EYES AND JUST ASKED ME.


YOU WONDER-ING IF I...
...EVER GET NERVOUS TOO?
MY HEART'S RACING BECAUSE OF YOU RIGHT NOW!

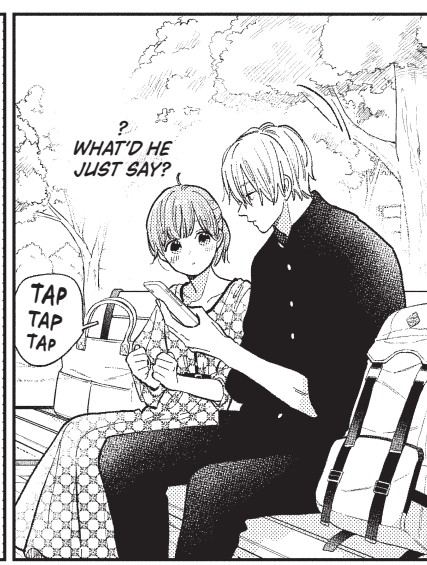

SO CLOSE!
YOU'RE NERVOUS, HUH?
I KNOW THEY SAID INTERVIEW, BUT ISN'T IT BASICALLY JUST ORIENTATION?


I MEAN, I'VE BEEN SPOOKED BEFORE.
YEARS AGO, IN THE STRAIT OF GIBRALTAR, I WAS ON THIS HUGE PASSENGER BOAT THAT WAS ROCKING LIKE A PENDULUM FROM BOW TO STERN.
?
?
I GUESS HE DOESN'T.
...
UHHH... HMM.
I'm glad you survived it.
ME TOO.
WE WERE ALMOST SHIP-WRECKED.
OH. THE GI S... BR TR AL AI TA... T R. OF...
!!
THAT WAS FOR SURE WHEN I REALIZED THAT THERE'S NOTHING PEOPLE CAN DO TO FIGHT NATURE.
PHEW.
YUKI.
GIVE ME YOUR HANDS.



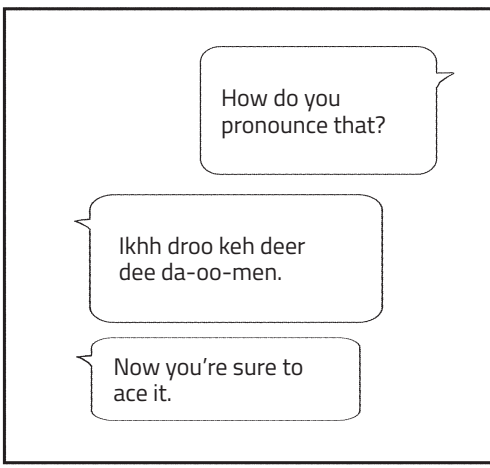

ICH DRÜCKE DIR DIE DAUMEN!


In Germany, if someone's nervous & you want to encourage them you do this with your hands and say ich drücke dir die Daumen
OH!

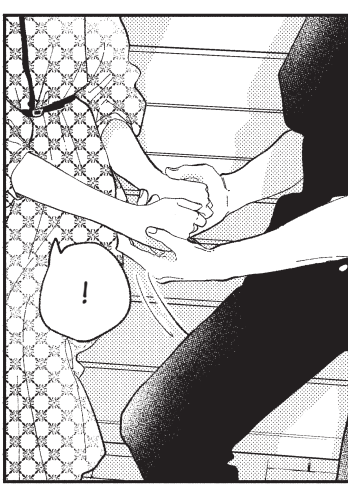

?
WHAT'D HE JUST SAY?
TAP TAP TAP


IKHH DROO KEH DEER DEE DA-OO-MEN....
IT'S LIKE SOME KIND OF MAGIC SPELL.


YOU CAN DO IT ON YOURSELF, TOO.
"I see!"

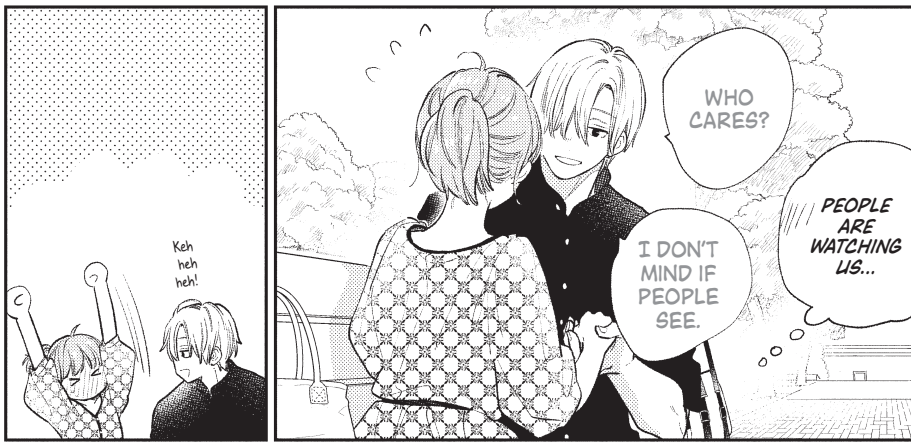

How do you pronounce that?
Ikhh droo keh deer dee da-oo-men.
Now you're sure to ace it.

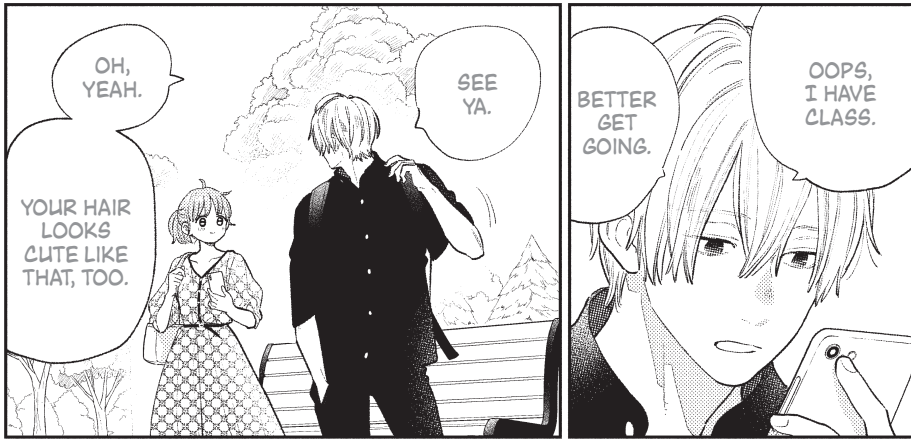

?!
?
!


!


You can do it.

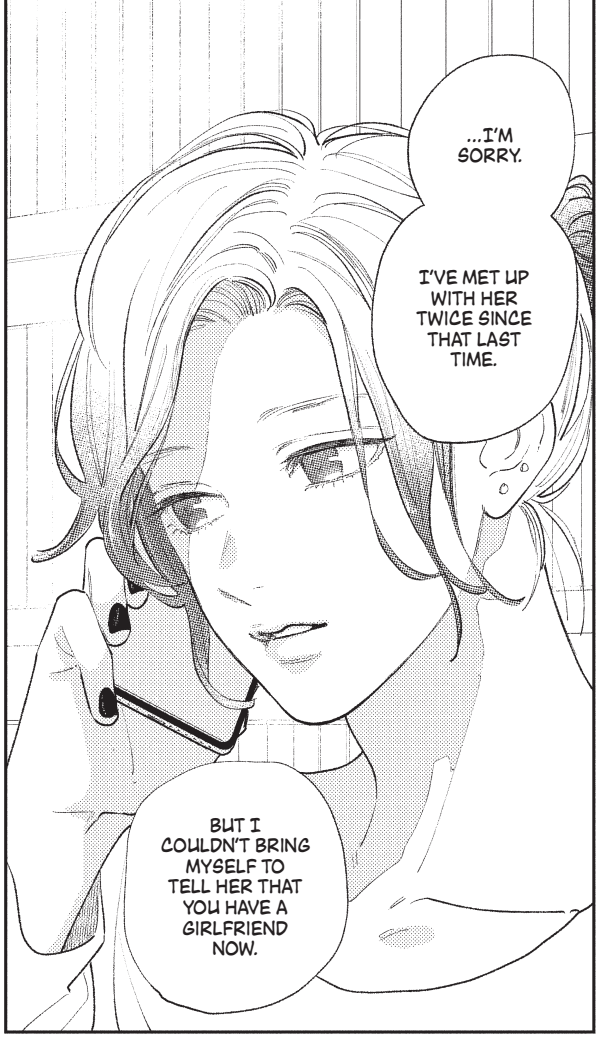

WHAT'S PASSING FROM YOUR EYES TO MINE RIGHT NOW...
IT'S SO MUCH...
...IT'S ALMOST OVERWHELMING.
ITSUOMI-SAN.
...LIKE YOU'RE GIVING ME A BIG HUG.
I'M WARM INSIDE...
SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE
GRAB
WHAP
STARE
STARE


Keh heh heh!
WHO CARES?
I DON'T MIND IF PEOPLE SEE.
PEOPLE ARE WATCHING US...


OH, YEAH.
YOUR HAIR LOOKS CUTE LIKE THAT, TOO.
SEE YA.
BETTER GET GOING.
OOPS, I HAVE CLASS.


BEEP
HELLO?
Itsu-kun, it's Shin.
BUZZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ

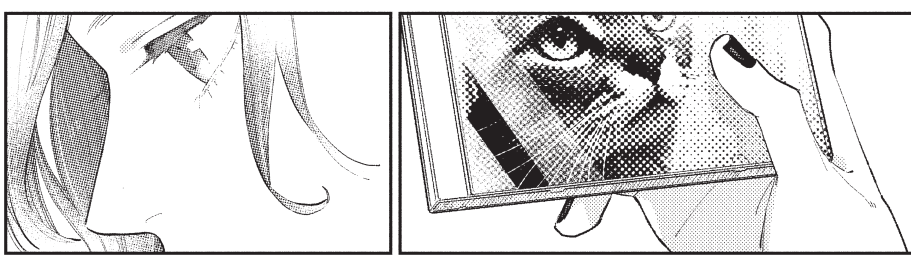

スタ TMP
スタ TMP


...I'M SORRY.
I'VE MET UP WITH HER TWICE SINCE THAT LAST TIME.
BUT I COULDN'T BRING MYSELF TO TELL HER THAT YOU HAVE A GIRLFRIEND NOW.


It's about Emma.
WHAT'S UP?
HAS SHE BEEN BY YOUR PLACE LATELY?
Nope. Haven't heard from her at all.


I promise to tell her this time for sure.
I'm seeing her again this weekend.
IT'S OKAY, I GET IT. YOU'VE GOT YOUR REASONS.


GOTCHA.
LET ME KNOW HOW IT GOES.

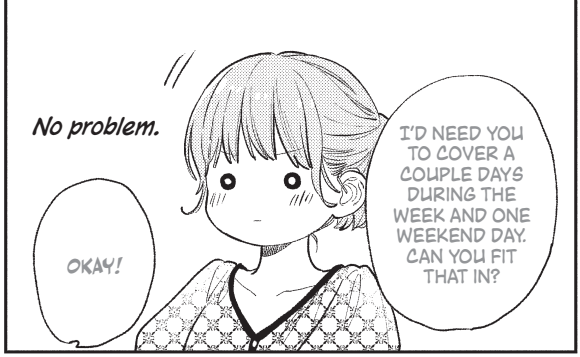



CLENCH
RIGHT... IT'LL BE FINE!
IKHH DROO KEH DEER DEE DA-OO-MEN!
WOW, I'M SO NERVOUS!
Let's see...
I'LL SAVE MONEY BY WALKING THERE!
HERE GOES.
AN INTERVIEW AT A CAFÉ!
さく MARCH
さく MARCH
開催中
で営業
もん
どんぶり丼

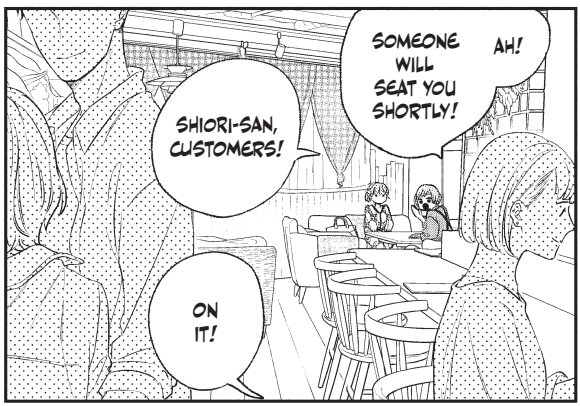

OPEN
HM?!
CAFÉ GRAND BLUE...
IT SHOULD BE AROUND HERE...
AH!
Grand Blue
WHAT...? IS SHE LIKE A GUARD OR SOMETHING...?
YOU'RE EARLY!
COME ON IN!
THADUMP
ドキ
ドキ
THADUMP
"Yuki-chan?!"


SO THIS LADY IS MADOKA-CHAN'S AUNT...
SHE'S SO YOUNG!
SHE COULD BE A MODEL!
ドキ THADUMP
ドキ THADUMP
THANKS FOR PRINTING OUT YOUR RÉSUMÉ!
OH, KOUIN COLLEGE. THAT'S CLOSE!
LET'S SEE...
AKI-SAN.
CAFE
Grand Blue
AKI WATANAKA
With volunteers...
HM?!
I DON'T KNOW THAT SIGN!
SORRY, COULD YOU WRITE IT?
CAN I ASK...?
How do you take courses at college?
WOW! I DIDN'T KNOW COLLEGES DID THAT KIND OF THING.
MADOKA SKIPPED COLLEGE TO START WORKING, YOU SEE.
There are volunteers who help me take notes, on the computer or on paper.

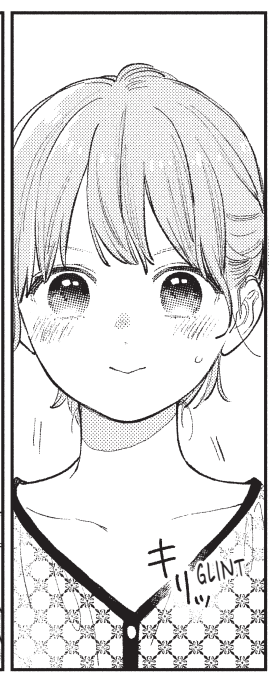

SHE'S BEING SO NICE...
FLAP
IT'S AN EXPLANATION OF THE CAFÉ'S MENU AND EVERYTHING ELSE YOU NEED TO KNOW.
COULD YOU READ THIS?
...
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
dessert
castella cake
Yes, I read it all.
WHOA.
NO WAY!
YOU'RE ALREADY DONE READING IT?!

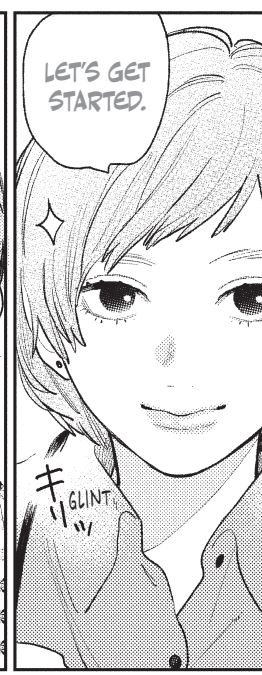

No problem.
I'D NEED YOU TO COVER A COUPLE DAYS DURING THE WEEK AND ONE WEEKEND DAY. CAN YOU FIT THAT IN?
OKAY!


I'M IMPRESSED!
You must have superpowers.
WELL, I CAN'T GUARANTEE I'LL REMEMBER IT ALL...

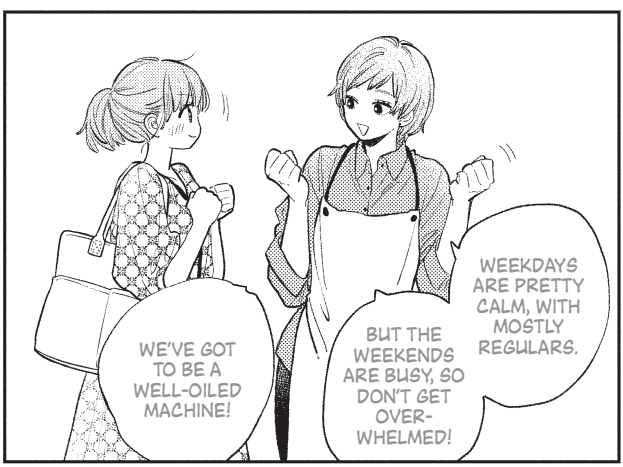

AH!
SOMEONE WILL SEAT YOU SHORTLY!
SHIORI-SAN, CUSTOMERS!
ON IT!

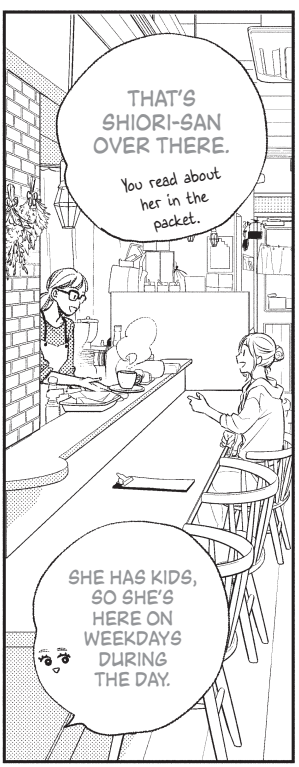

RIGHT!
WE'LL SCHEDULE YOUR SHIFTS LATER.
WELCOME ABOARD, YUKI-CHAN!


GLINT

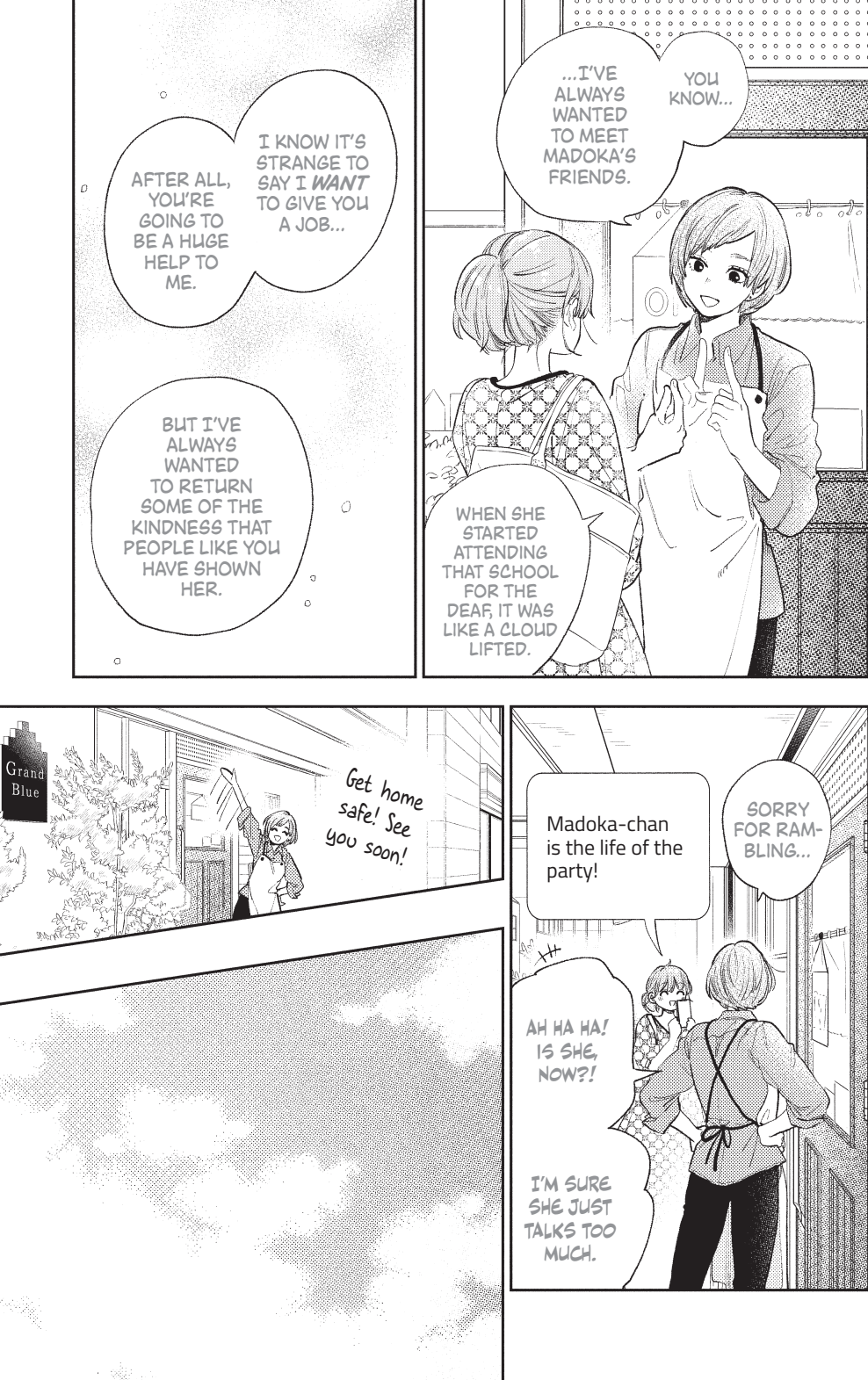

LET'S GET STARTED.
GLINT

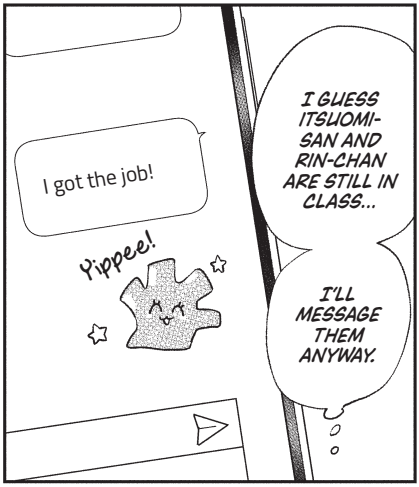

THE PLEASURE'S ALL MINE!
Thank you for having me!

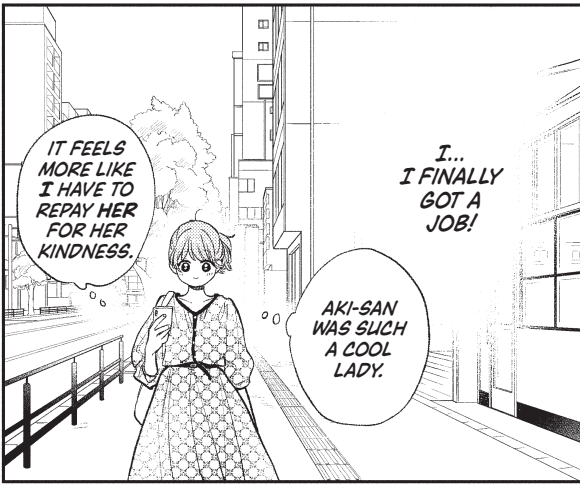

WE'VE GOT TO BE A WELL-OILED MACHINE!
BUT THE WEEKENDS ARE BUSY, SO DON'T GET OVER-WHELMED!
WEEKDAYS ARE PRETTY CALM, WITH MOSTLY REGULARS.


THAT'S SHIORI-SAN OVER THERE.
You read about her in the packet.
SHE HAS KIDS, SO SHE'S HERE ON WEEKDAYS DURING THE DAY.


Grand Blue
HEE HEE! I'M SO GLAD I GOT TO MEET YOU TODAY.


I KNOW IT'S STRANGE TO SAY I WANT TO GIVE YOU A JOB...
AFTER ALL, YOU'RE GOING TO BE A HUGE HELP TO ME.
BUT I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO RETURN SOME OF THE KINDNESS THAT PEOPLE LIKE YOU HAVE SHOWN HER.
YOU KNOW...
...I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO MEET MADOKA'S FRIENDS.
WHEN SHE STARTED ATTENDING THAT SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF, IT WAS LIKE A CLOUD LIFTED.
Grand Blue
Get home safe! See you soon!
SORRY FOR RAMBLING...
Madoka-chan is the life of the party!
AH HA HA! IS SHE, NOW?!
I'M SURE SHE JUST TALKS TOO MUCH.


I got the job!
Yippee!
I GUESS ITSUOMI-SAN AND RIN-CHAN ARE STILL IN CLASS...
I'LL MESSAGE THEM ANYWAY.

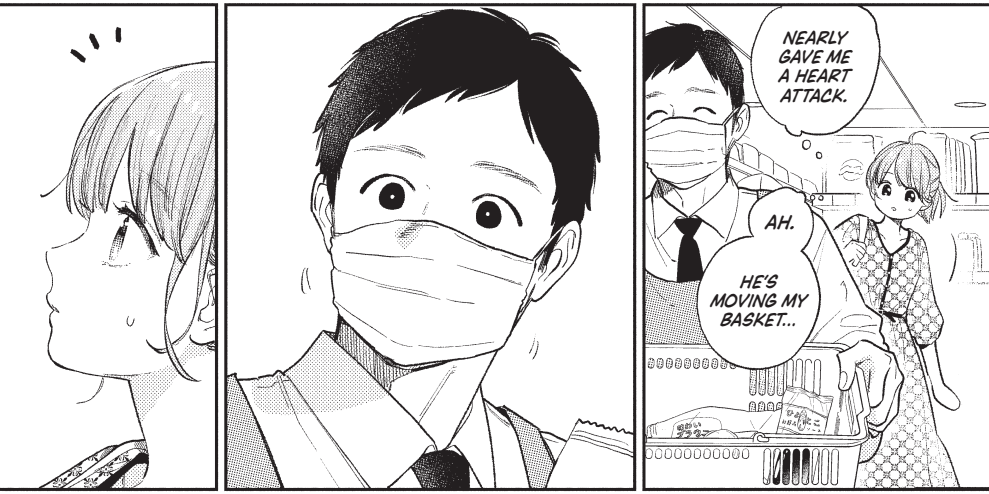

I... I FINALLY GOT A JOB!
AKI-SAN WAS SUCH A COOL LADY.
IT FEELS MORE LIKE I HAVE TO REPAY HER FOR HER KINDNESS.

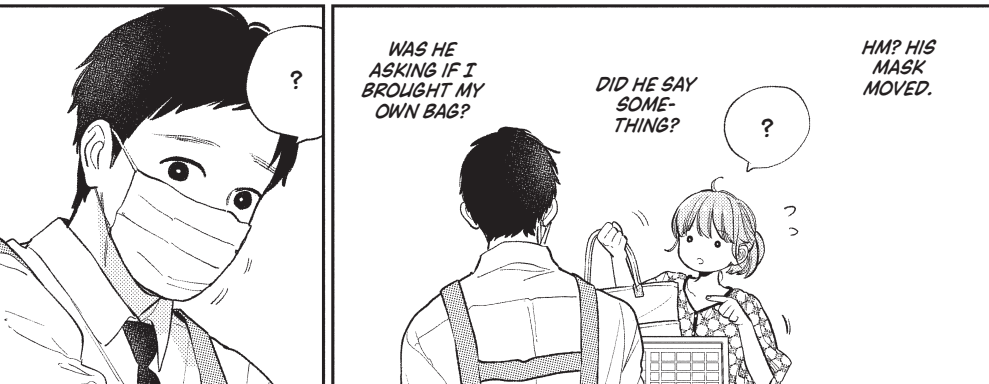

OGAWA SUPERMARKET


IT'S MY MOM.
Please pick up some okonomiyaki sauce on your way home.


She communicates to me with gestures.
Do you have your loyalty card?
THE LADY WHO'S USUALLY AT THE REGISTER ISN'T HERE.
HUH?


GUESS I'LL GO IN THIS LINE, THEN.
カシッ
GRAB
!
NEXT CUSTOMER! STEP RIGHT UP!

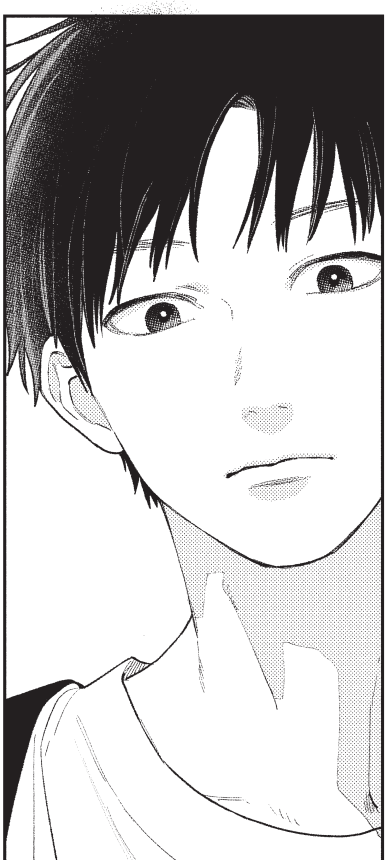

NEARLY GAVE ME A HEART ATTACK.
AH.
HE'S MOVING MY BASKET...


?
WAS HE ASKING IF I BROUGHT MY OWN BAG?
DID HE SAY SOME-THING?
?
HM? HIS MASK MOVED.

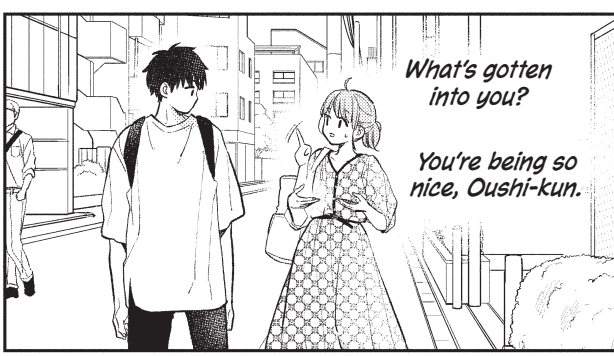

OH, YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT.
クリーニ
LOYALTY CARD...?
OUSHI-KUN.


I came to get instant noodles and yakisoba.
You out running errands?
He was asking if you were collecting their campaign stickers.
OH, SO THAT WAS IT.
IT'S NOT EASY WHEN THEY HAVE A MASK ON, HUH?
Sorry, and thanks.
HUH?
NAGOMI
TAP
SUPER-MARKETS CAN BE A REAL PAIN, CAN'T THEY?
YOU DON'T NEED TO THANK ME.
BUT IT DOES LOOK GOOD.
A thank-you gift. It's really yummy!

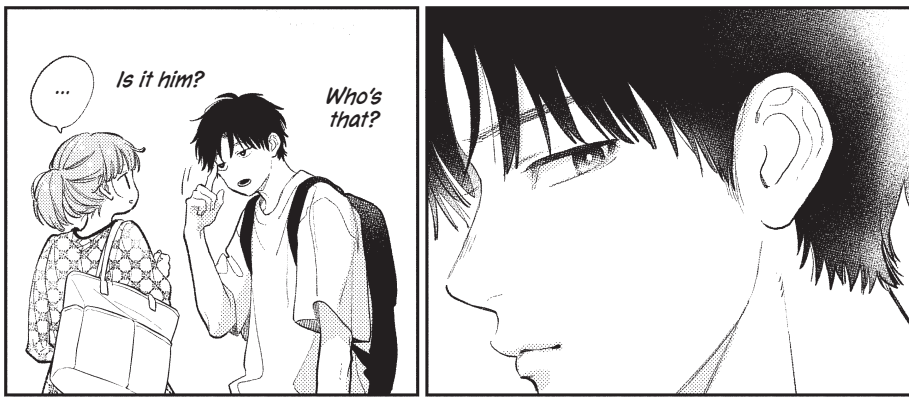

Call me next time.
I'll come with you.

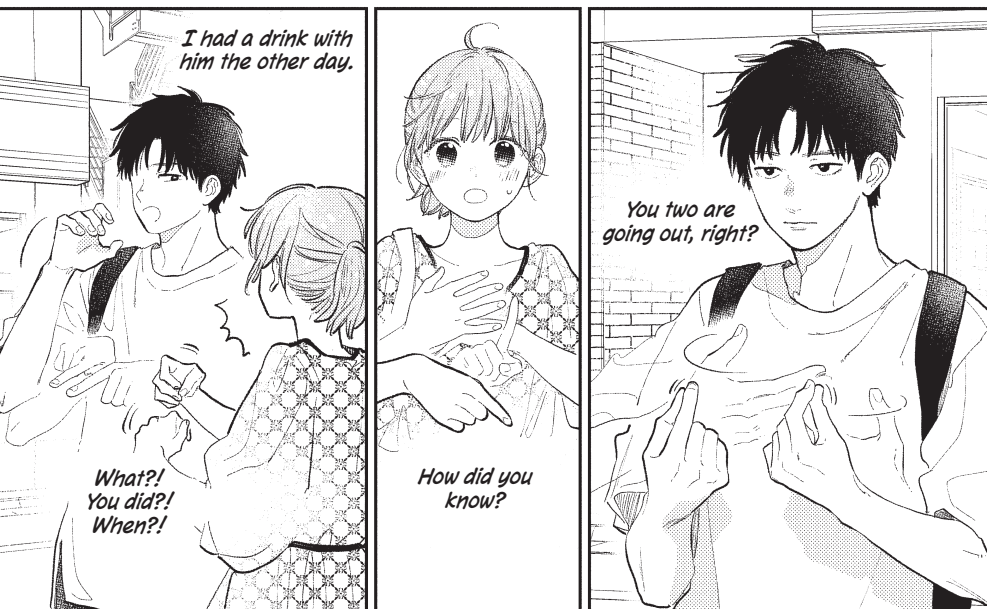


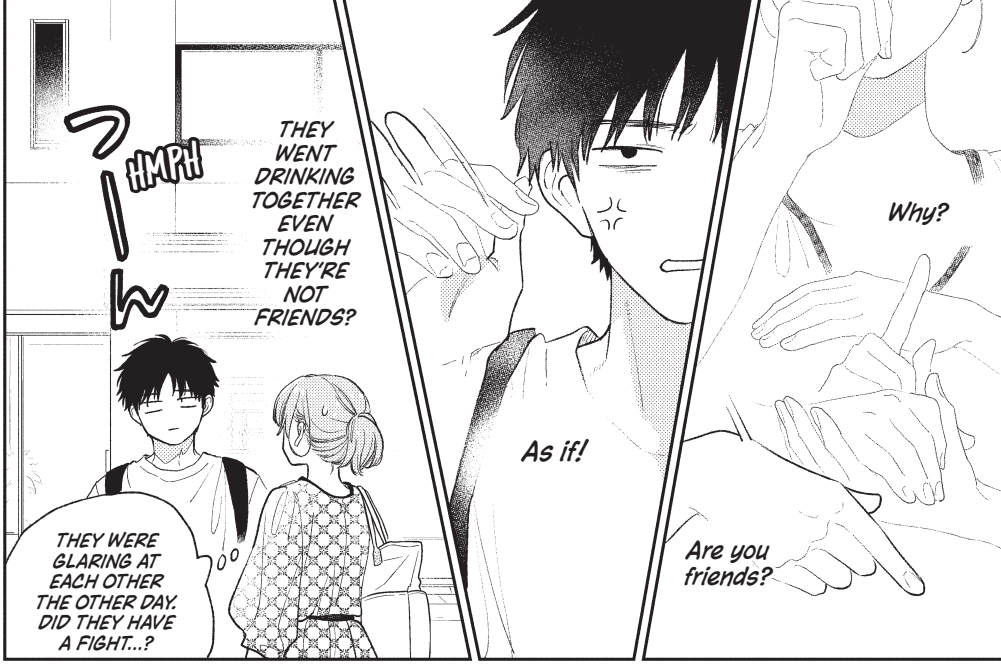

...
I'm fine.
And anyway...

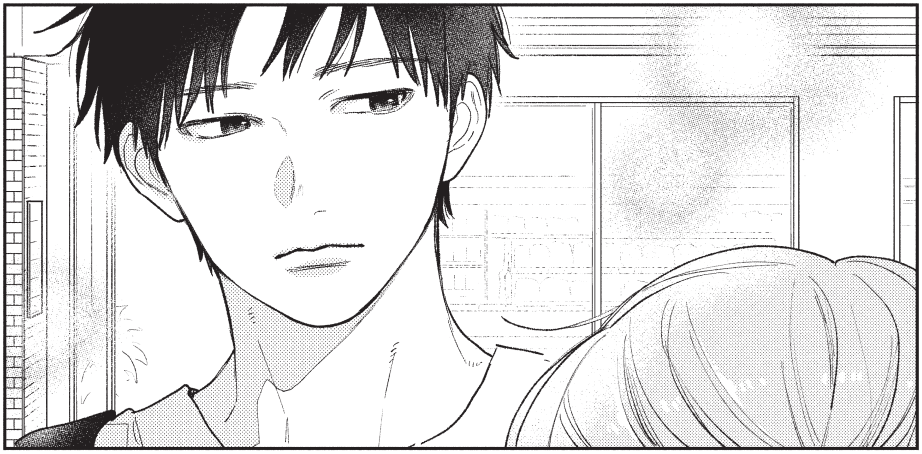

What's gotten into you?
You're being so nice, Oushi-kun.

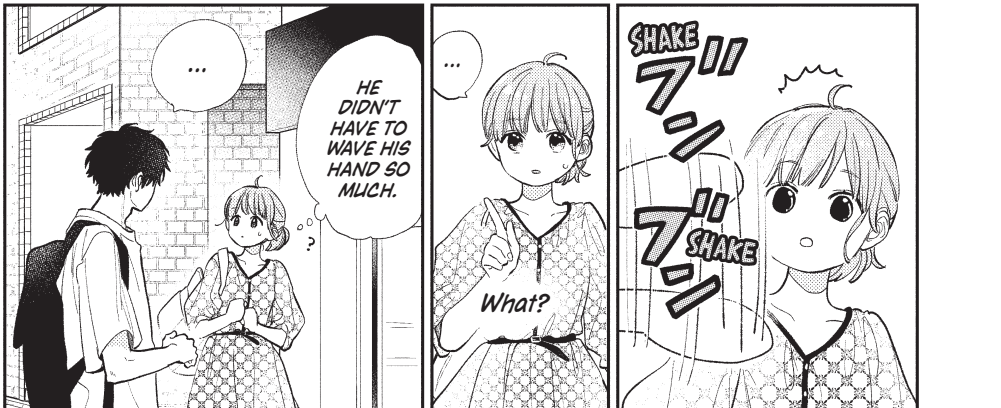

The job's in the bag!
Yippee!
Itsuomi
Congrats.
...
AM I?
スタスタ
スタスタ
?
!

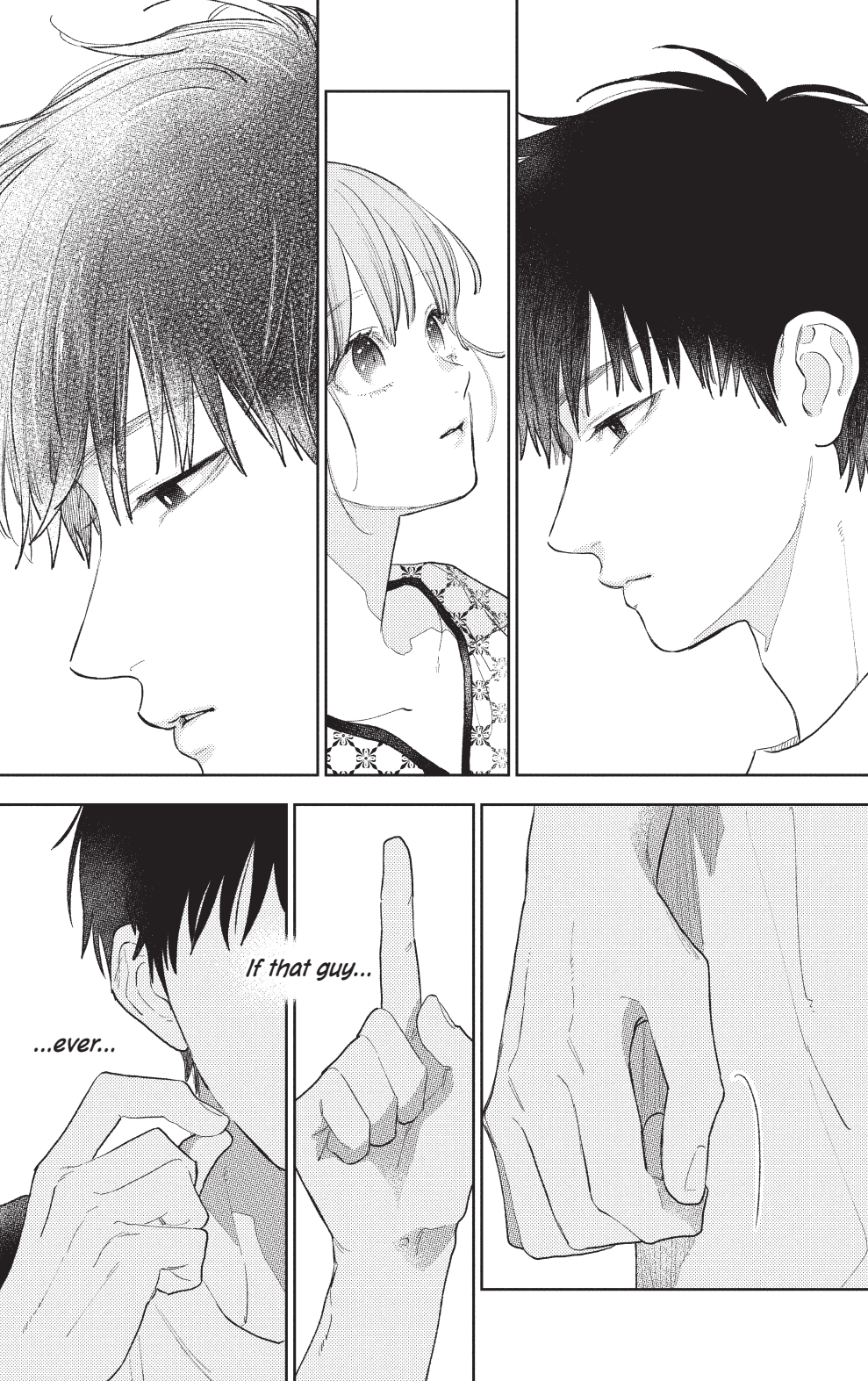

...
Is it him?
Who's that?


I had a drink with him the other day.
What?! You did?! When?!
How did you know?
You two are going out, right?

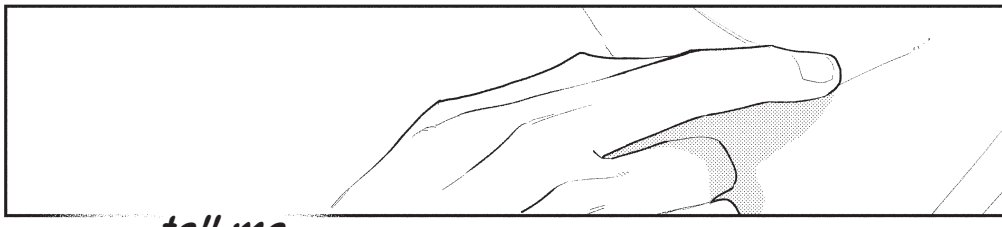

THEY WENT DRINKING TOGETHER EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE NOT FRIENDS?
HMPH
THEY WERE GLARING AT EACH OTHER THE OTHER DAY. DID THEY HAVE A FIGHT...?
As if!
Why?
Are you friends?




...
HE DIDN'T HAVE TO WAVE HIS HAND SO MUCH.
?
...
What?
SHAKE
SHAKE

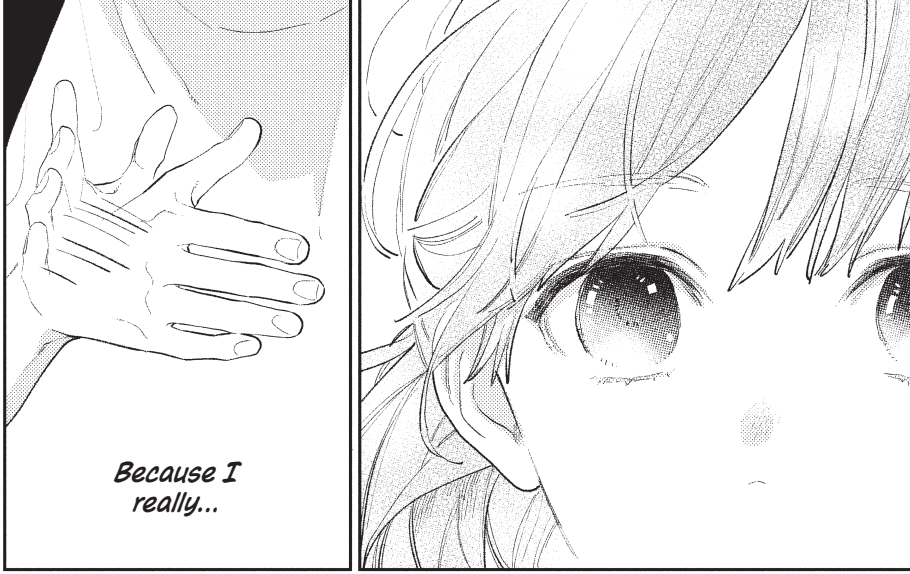

If that guy...
...ever...





...tell me.




Because I really...

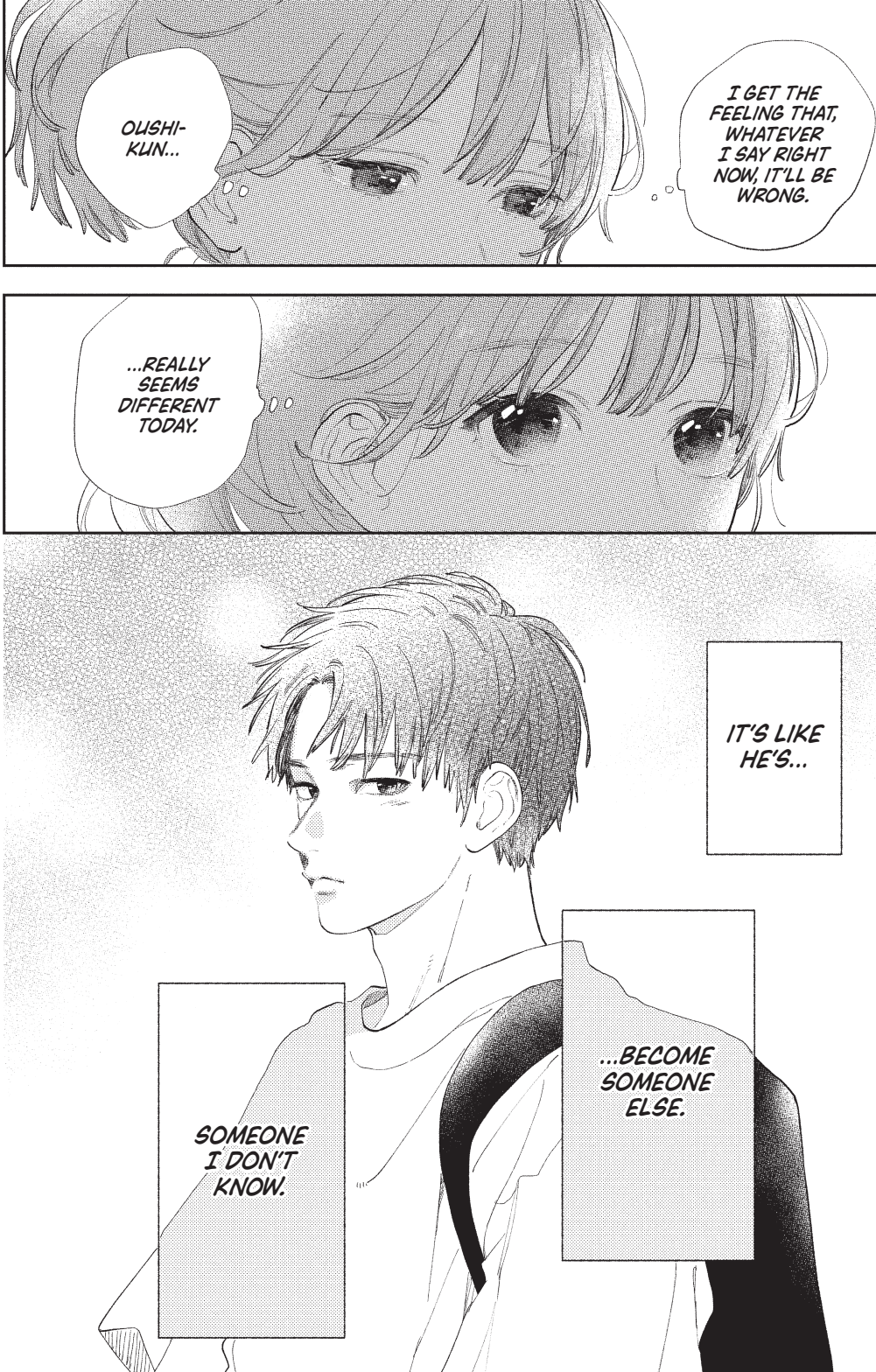

...really hate that guy.
But when you went drinking with him...
...didn't you think...?
Think what?


...that he's not the type you can hate?
Didn't you think...
He's really very...
...ki...


DON'T...
...COMPLIMENT HIM.

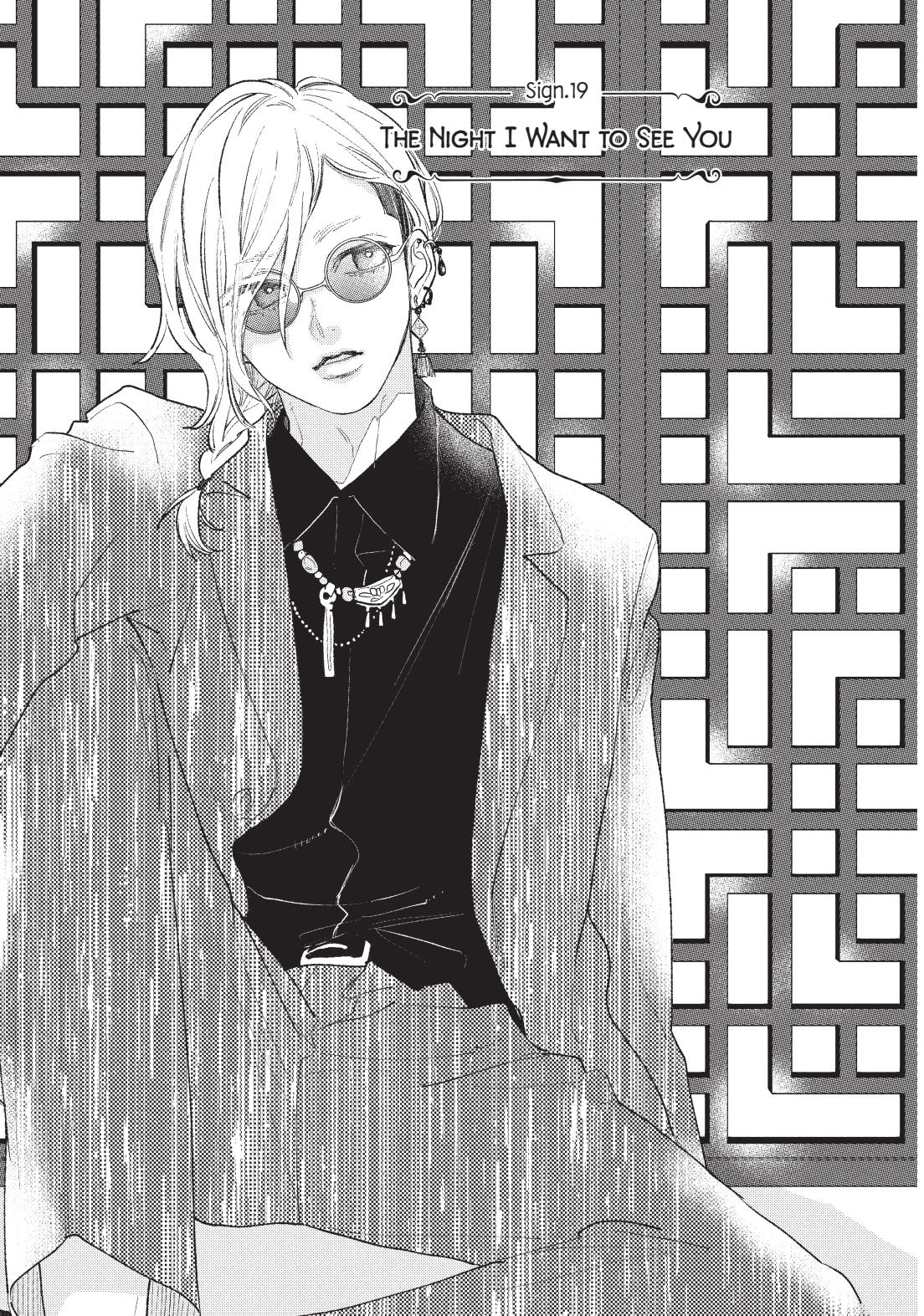

DON'T USE THOSE SIGNS...
SQUEEZE
キュっ
...WHEN YOU'RE WITH ME.
...ABOUT HIM...


I'M SORRY.
DID THAT HURT?
...
IT'S THE FIRST TIME...
...HE'S EVER STOPPED ME...
...FROM MAKING A SIGN.
WHAT DO I SAY? SHOULD I ASK HIM WHAT HAPPENED?


OUSHI-KUN...
I GET THE FEELING THAT, WHATEVER I SAY RIGHT NOW, IT'LL BE WRONG.
...REALLY SEEMS DIFFERENT TODAY.
IT'S LIKE HE'S...
...BECOME SOMEONE ELSE.
SOMEONE I DON'T KNOW.

Sign.19

The Night I Want to See You

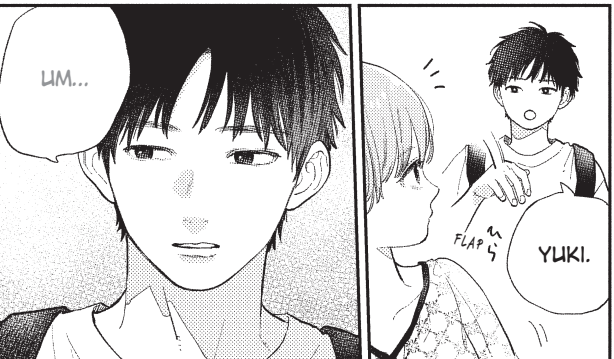



NEITHER OF US SAID ANYTHING AFTER THAT.

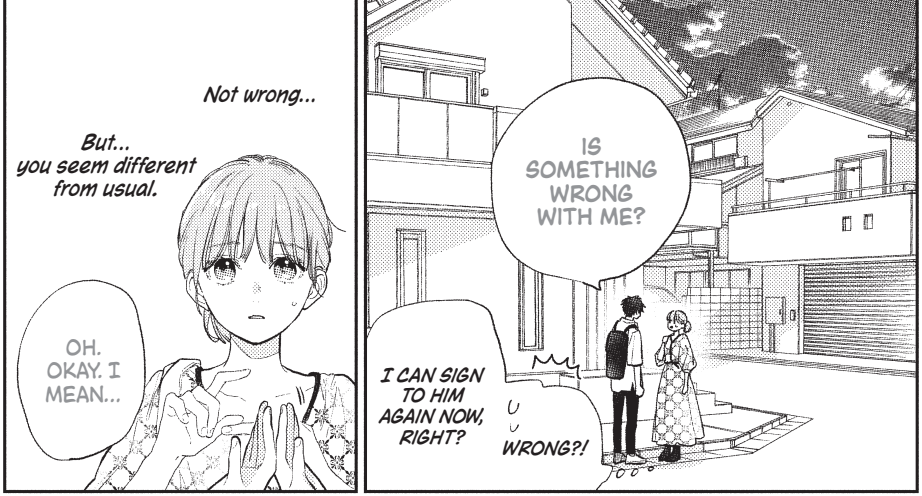

OUSHI-KUN'S FACE AND HANDS...
...WENT COMPLETELY STILL.

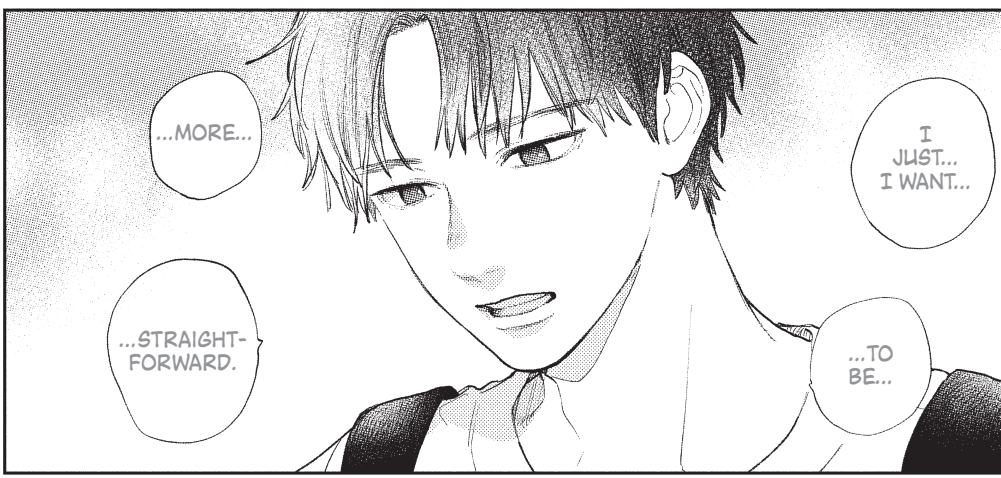

BUT SOMEHOW, THAT SAID MORE THAN WORDS COULD HAVE.

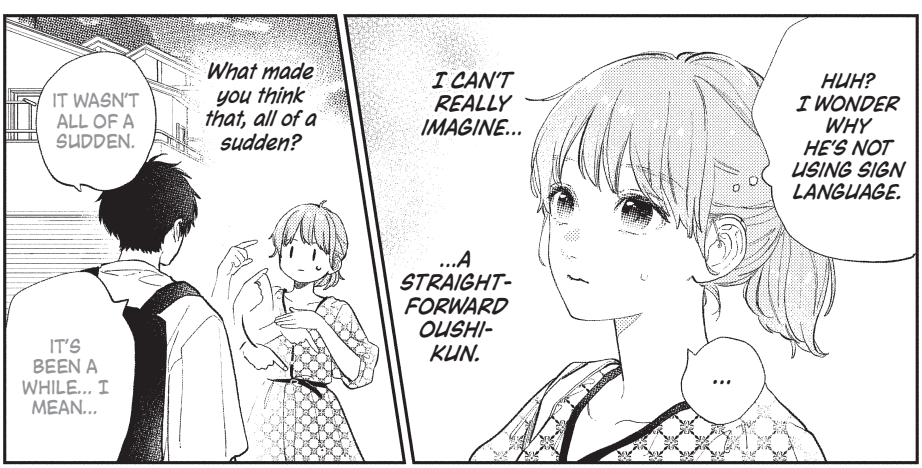

WE'RE ALREADY AT MY HOUSE.


UM...
FLAP
YUKI.


IT WAS LIKE HE'D CUT HIMSELF OFF..
...BECAUSE HE DIDN'T WANT TO GIVE AWAY WHAT HE WAS THINKING.

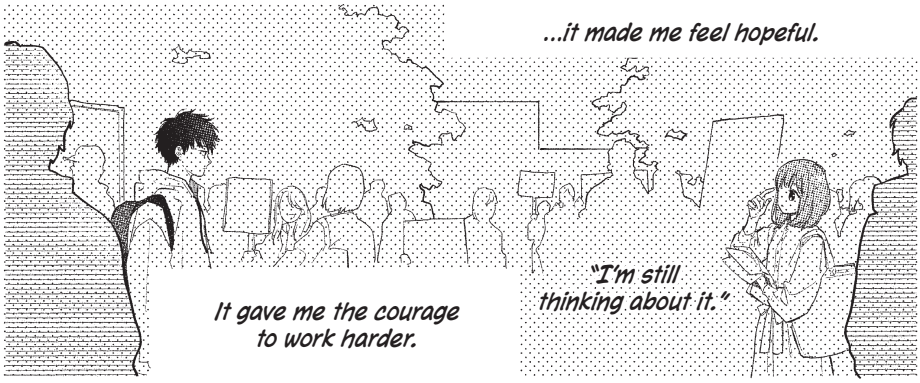

Not wrong...
But... you seem different from usual.
OH. OKAY. I MEAN...
IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH ME?
I CAN SIGN TO HIM AGAIN NOW, RIGHT?
WRONG?!

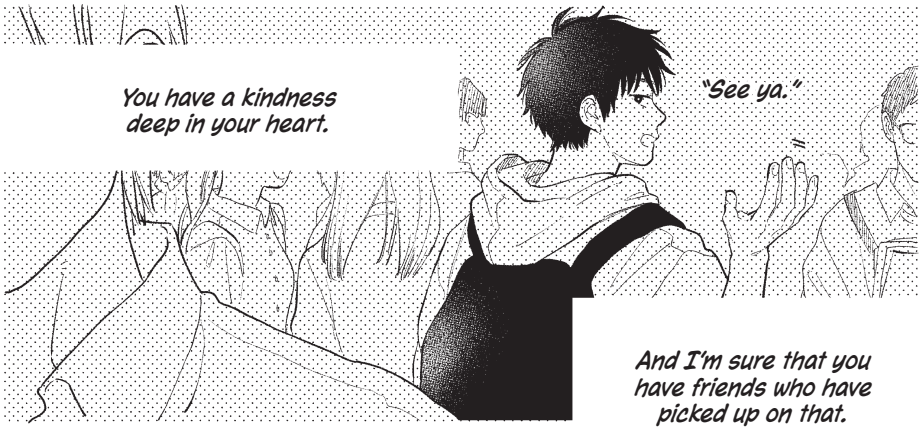

...MORE...
I JUST... I WANT...
...STRAIGHT-FORWARD.
...TO BE...


What made you think that, all of a sudden?
IT WASN'T ALL OF A SUDDEN.
IT'S BEEN A WHILE... I MEAN...
I CAN'T REALLY IMAGINE...
...A STRAIGHT-FORWARD OUSHI-KUN.
HUH? I WONDER WHY HE'S NOT USING SIGN LANGUAGE.
...


HM?
OUSHI-KUN'S... WORRIED.
HE SEEMS SO ANXIOUS TODAY.
A WHILE? DID SOMETHING HAPPEN WITH HIS COLLEGE FRIENDS?
Are you fighting with someone?
SOME-ONE?
I GUESS IT'S KINDA LIKE A FIGHT.
When I first enrolled at college...


...I didn't know anyone.
And, of course, nobody knew I couldn't hear.
"You joining a club?"
But every time you signed to me, Oushi-kun...

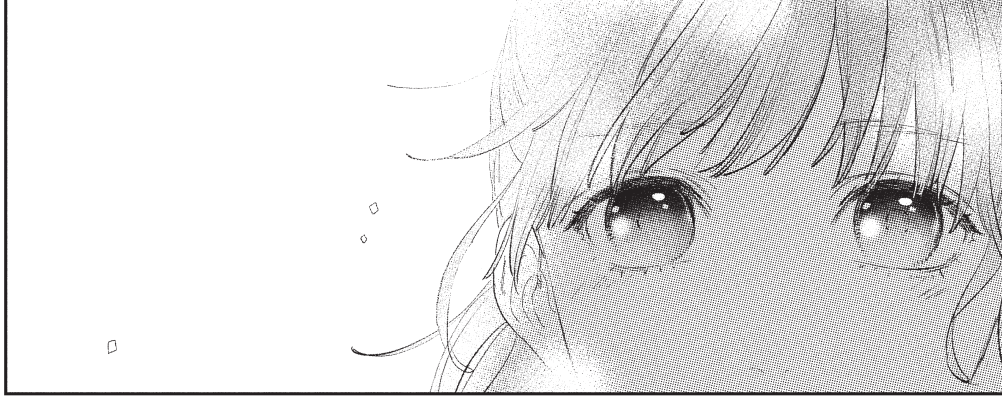

...it made me feel hopeful.
It gave me the courage to work harder.
"I'm still thinking about it."

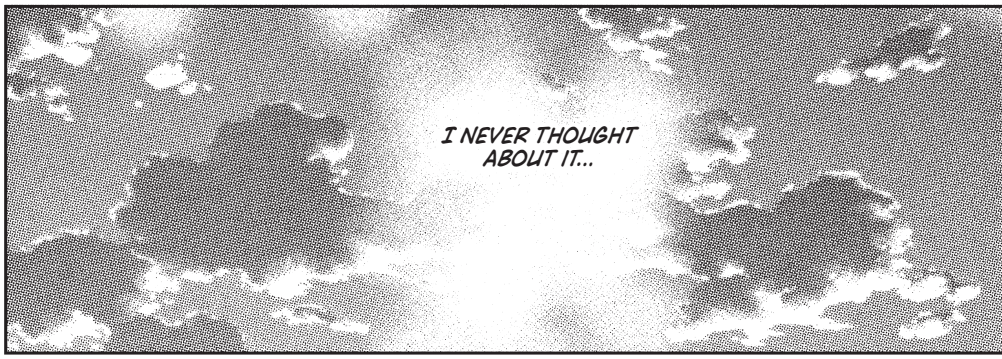

You have a kindness deep in your heart.
"See ya."
And I'm sure that you have friends who have picked up on that.


...
THAT'S IT? KINDA ANTICLIMACTIC.
Don't overthink it. Just be yourself.


So...

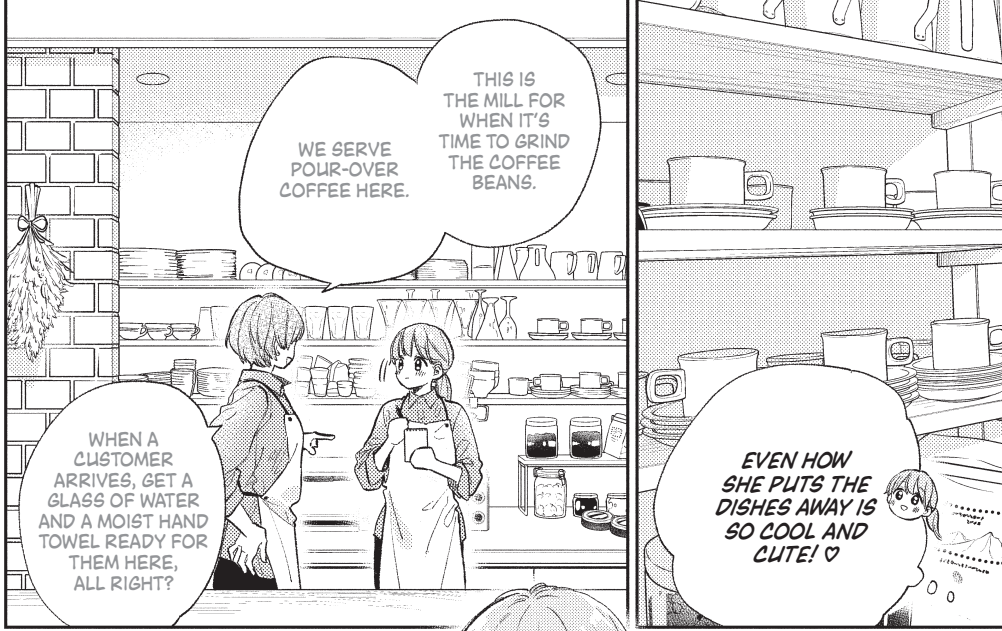

HMMM.
Whatever.
You got it.



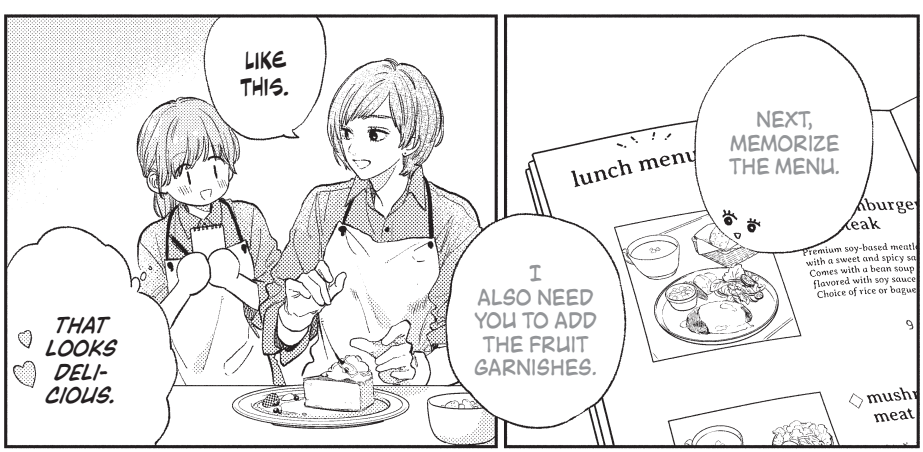

I NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT IT...


I HOPE OUSHI-KUN DOESN'T BROOD ABOUT IT TOO MUCH.
?
!
I GUESS HOW HEAVY SOMEONE'S WORRIES FEEL...
...DEPENDS ON WHO THEY ARE, AND HOW MUCH THEY CAN CARRY AT THAT MOMENT.
BUT HOW MUCH DO I REALLY KNOW...
...ABOUT OUSHI-KUN?

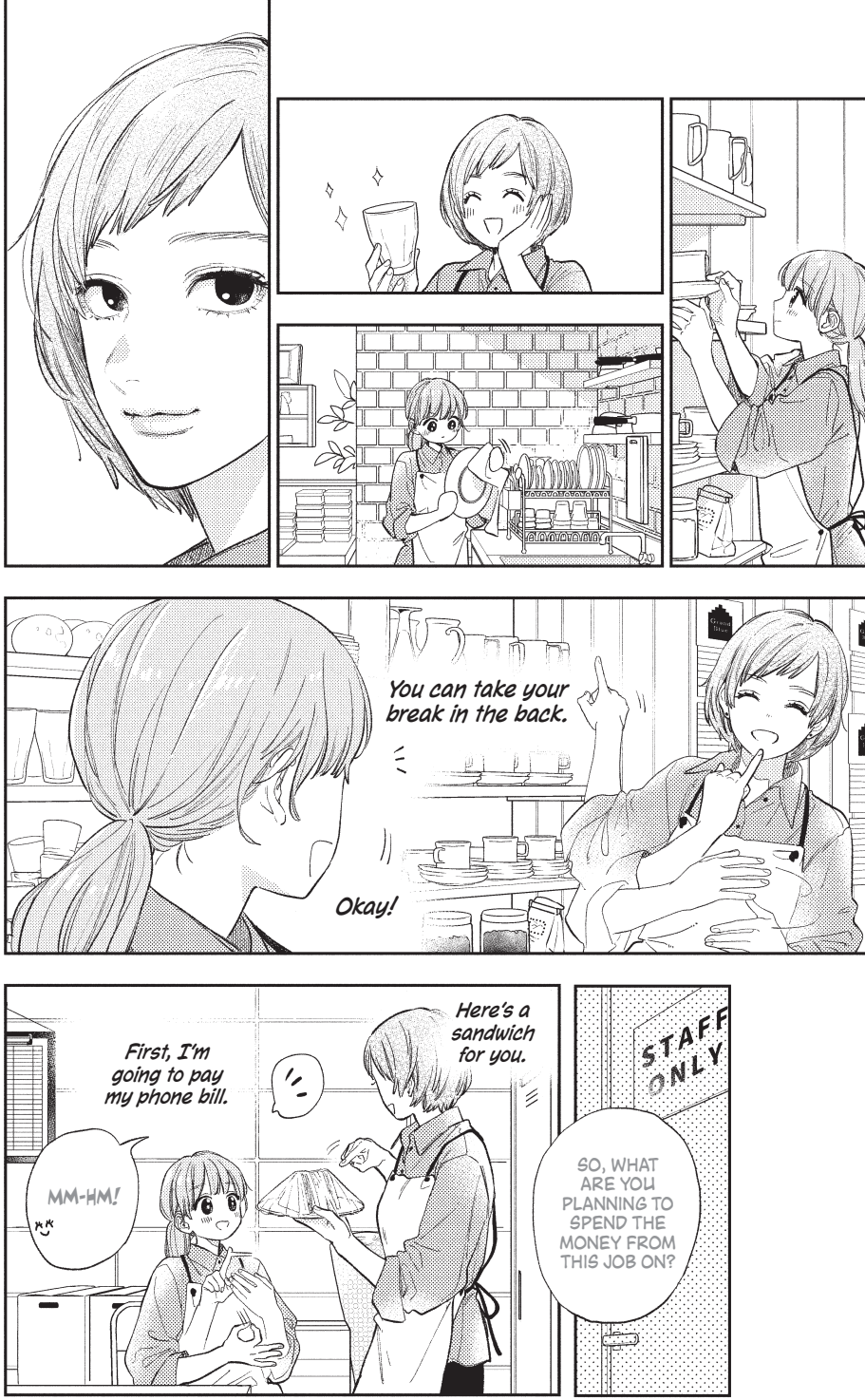

IT'S HAPPEN-
IIIIIING!
Aki
Sorry for the late notice, but can you come in this Saturday starting at 11?
!
Grand Blue
FIRST, MEMORIZE WHERE THE DISHWARE, CUTLERY, AND COOKWARE ARE ALL KEPT.

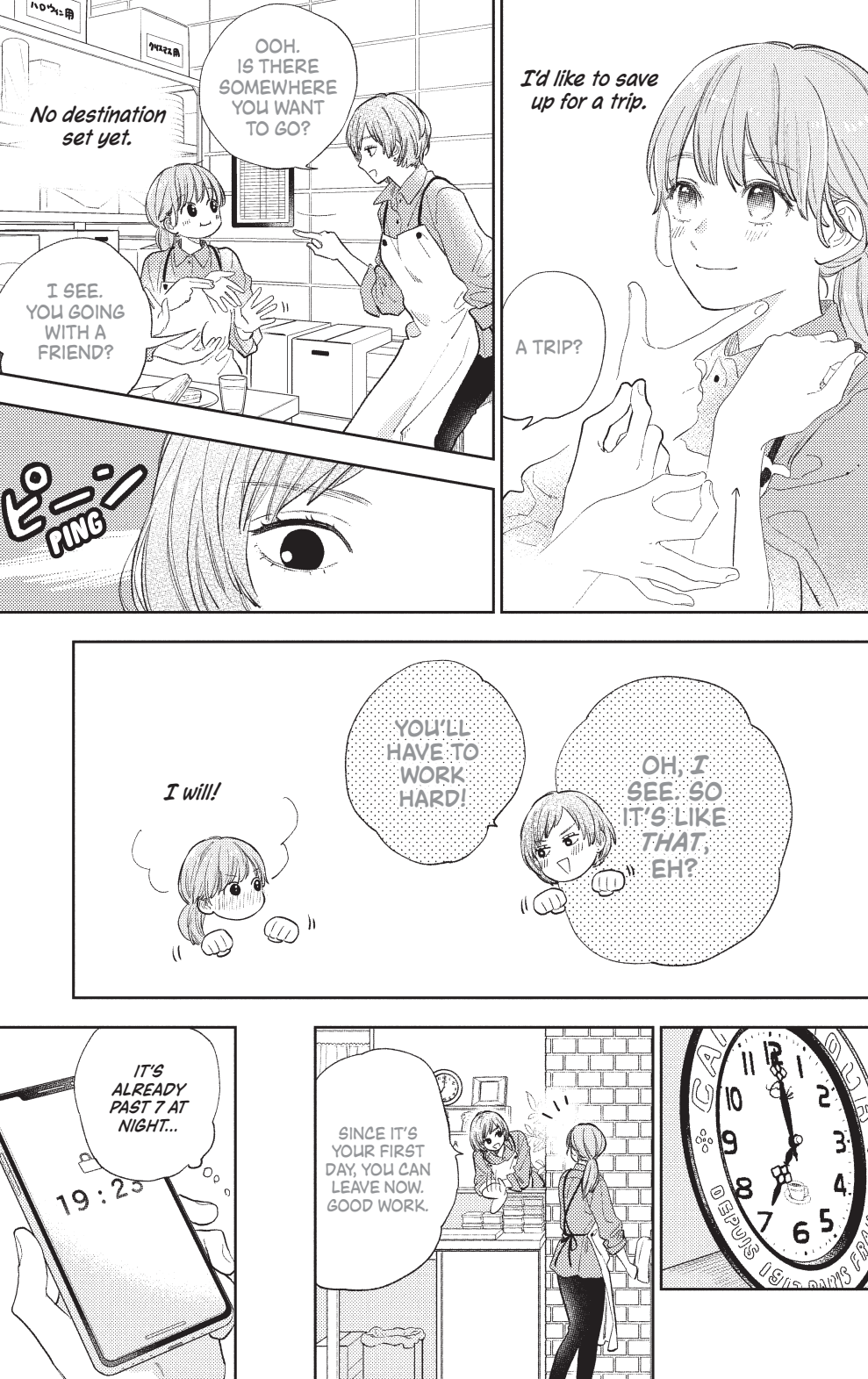

WE SERVE POUR-OVER COFFEE HERE.
THIS IS THE MILL FOR WHEN IT'S TIME TO GRIND THE COFFEE BEANS.
WHEN A CUSTOMER ARRIVES, GET A GLASS OF WATER AND A MOIST HAND TOWEL READY FOR THEM HERE, ALL RIGHT?
EVEN HOW SHE PUTS THE DISHES AWAY IS SO COOL AND CUTE! ♡

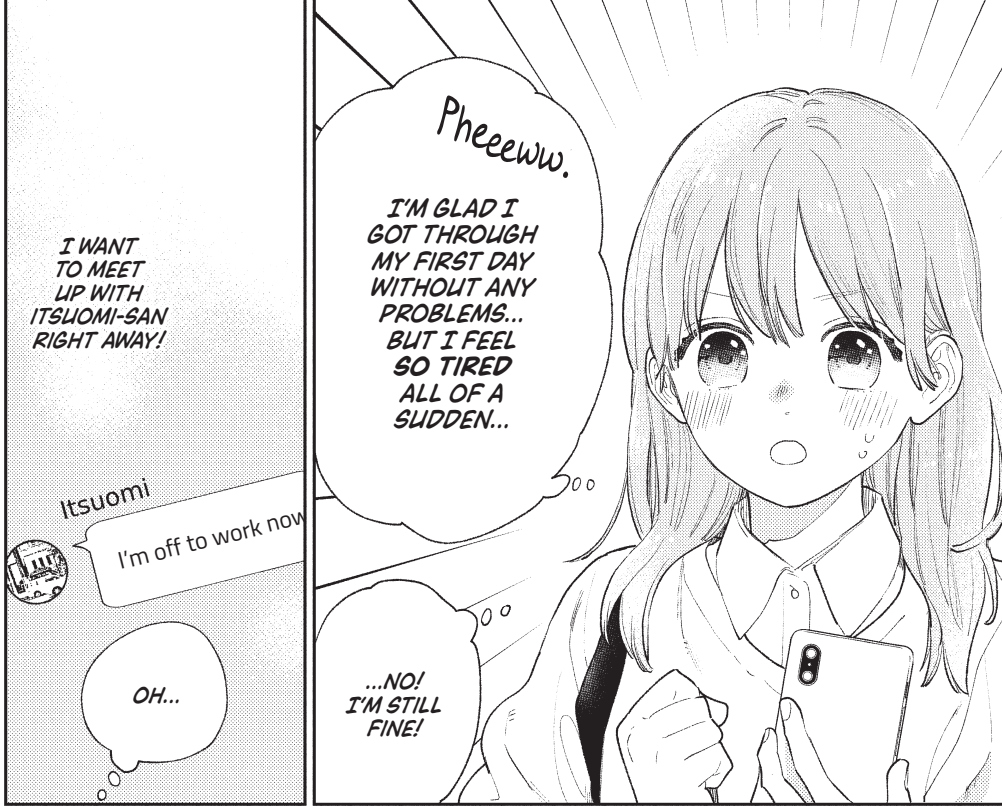

OKAY!
THANKS!
SWF 11/

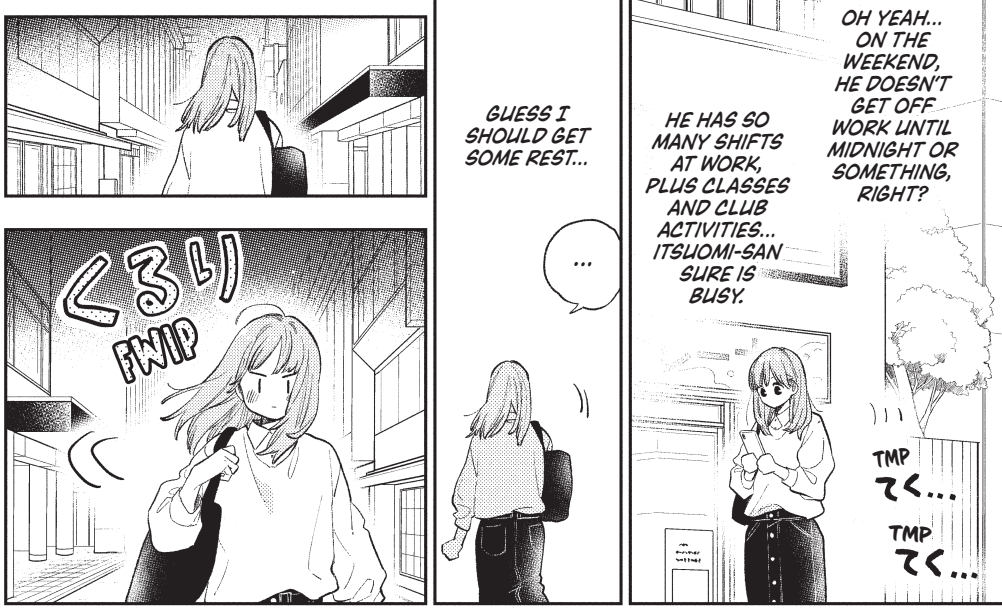

LIKE THIS.
THAT LOOKS DELI-CIOUS.
I ALSO NEED YOU TO ADD THE FRUIT GARNISHES.
NEXT, MEMORIZE THE MENU.
lunch menu

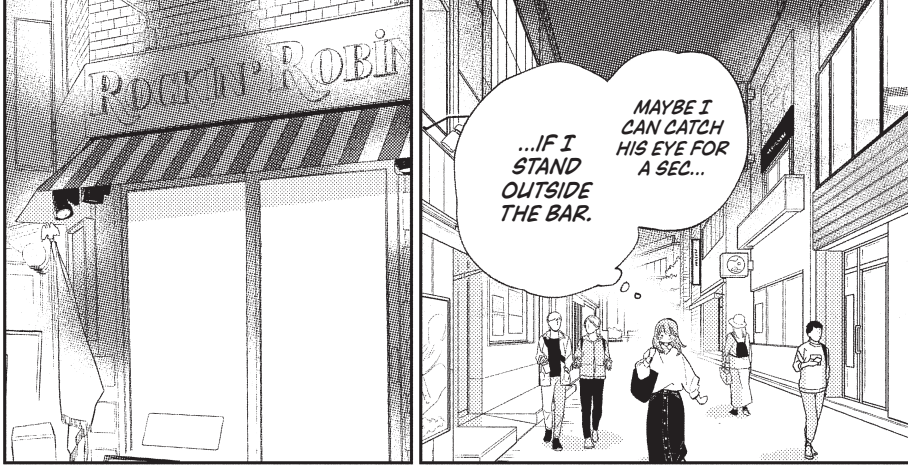

Next comes prepping vegetables and shredding the cabbage!

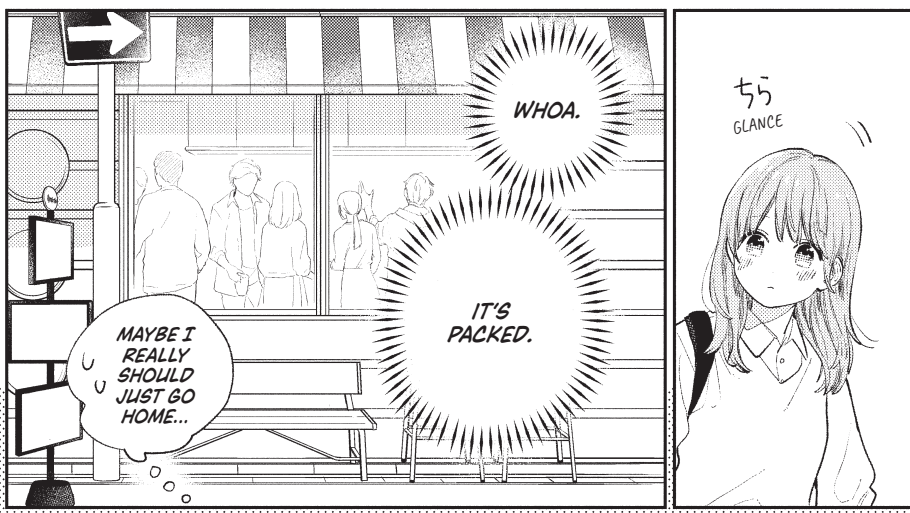

You can take your break in the back.
Okay!
Here's a sandwich for you.
First, I'm going to pay my phone bill.
!
MM-HM!
STAFF ONLY
SO, WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING TO SPEND THE MONEY FROM THIS JOB ON?


No destination set yet.
OOH. IS THERE SOMEWHERE YOU WANT TO GO?
I SEE. YOU GOING WITH A FRIEND?
ピーン PING
I'd like to save up for a trip.
A TRIP?
I will!
YOU'LL HAVE TO WORK HARD!
OH, I SEE. SO IT'S LIKE THAT, EH?
IT'S ALREADY PAST 7 AT NIGHT...
19 : 25
SINCE IT'S YOUR FIRST DAY, YOU CAN LEAVE NOW. GOOD WORK.


I WANT TO MEET UP WITH ITSUOMI-SAN RIGHT AWAY!
Itsuomi
I'm off to work now
OH...
Pheeeww.
I'M GLAD I GOT THROUGH MY FIRST DAY WITHOUT ANY PROBLEMS... BUT I FEEL SO TIRED ALL OF A SUDDEN...
...NO! I'M STILL FINE!


GUESS I SHOULD GET SOME REST...
...
HE HAS SO MANY SHIFTS AT WORK, PLUS CLASSES AND CLUB ACTIVITIES... ITSUOMI-SAN SURE IS BUSY.
OH YEAH... ON THE WEEKEND, HE DOESN'T GET OFF WORK UNTIL MIDNIGHT OR SOMETHING, RIGHT?
TMP てく...
TMP てく...
くるり
FWIP

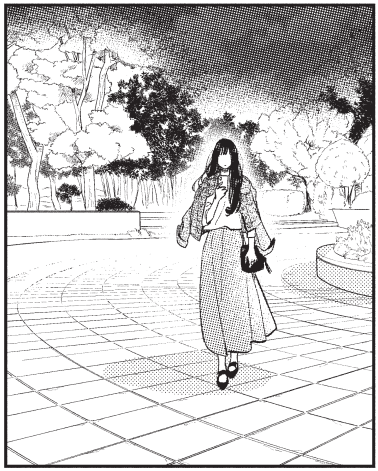

ROCKIN' ROBIN
...IF I STAND OUTSIDE THE BAR.
MAYBE I CAN CATCH HIS EYE FOR A SEC...

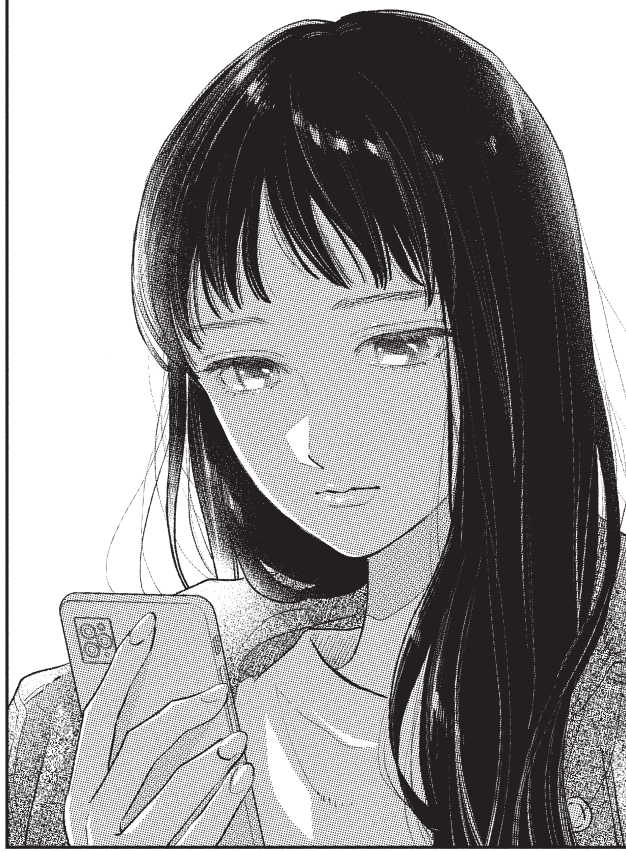

WHOA.
IT'S PACKED.
MAYBE I REALLY SHOULD JUST GO HOME...
ちら
GLANCE

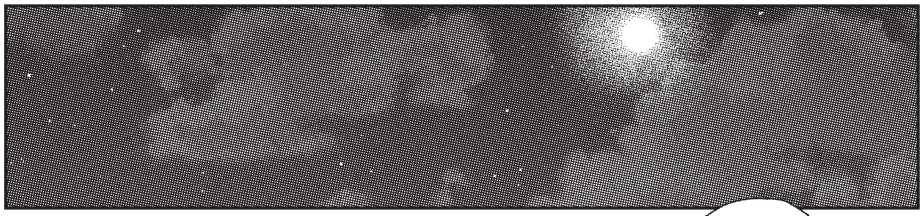

ザザーン
SSSHHH


HANG IN THERE, ITSUOMI-SAN! KYOUYA-SAN!

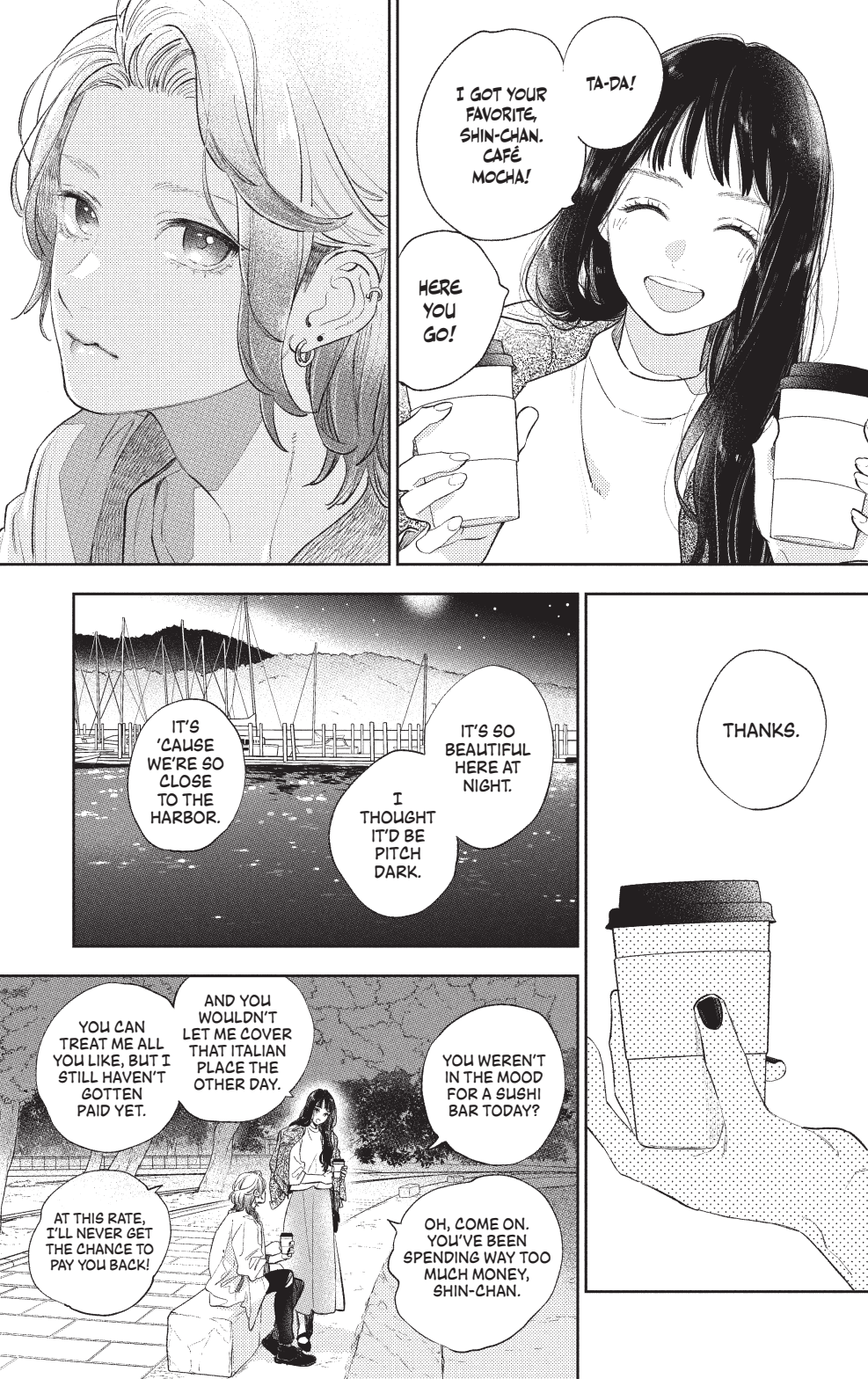

Shin
I'm already here.



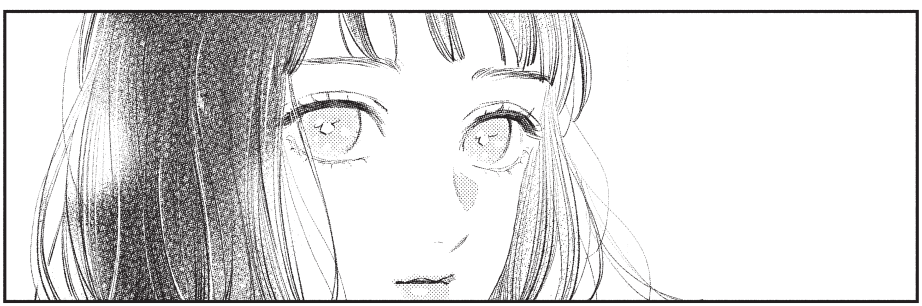


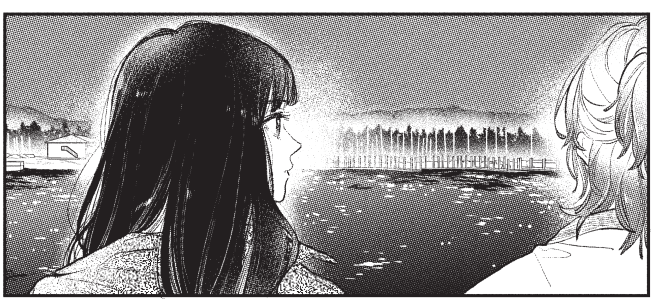



SHIN-CHAN?


TA-DA!
I GOT YOUR FAVORITE, SHIN-CHAN. CAFÉ MOCHA!
HERE YOU GO!
IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL HERE AT NIGHT.
I THOUGHT IT'D BE PITCH DARK.
IT'S 'CAUSE WE'RE SO CLOSE TO THE HARBOR.
THANKS.
YOU WEREN'T IN THE MOOD FOR A SUSHI BAR TODAY?
OH, COME ON. YOU'VE BEEN SPENDING WAY TOO MUCH MONEY, SHIN-CHAN.
AND YOU WOULDN'T LET ME COVER THAT ITALIAN PLACE THE OTHER DAY.
YOU CAN TREAT ME ALL YOU LIKE, BUT I STILL HAVEN'T GOTTEN PAID YET.
AT THIS RATE, I'LL NEVER GET THE CHANCE TO PAY YOU BACK!


IT'S FINE. I DON'T REALLY CARE.

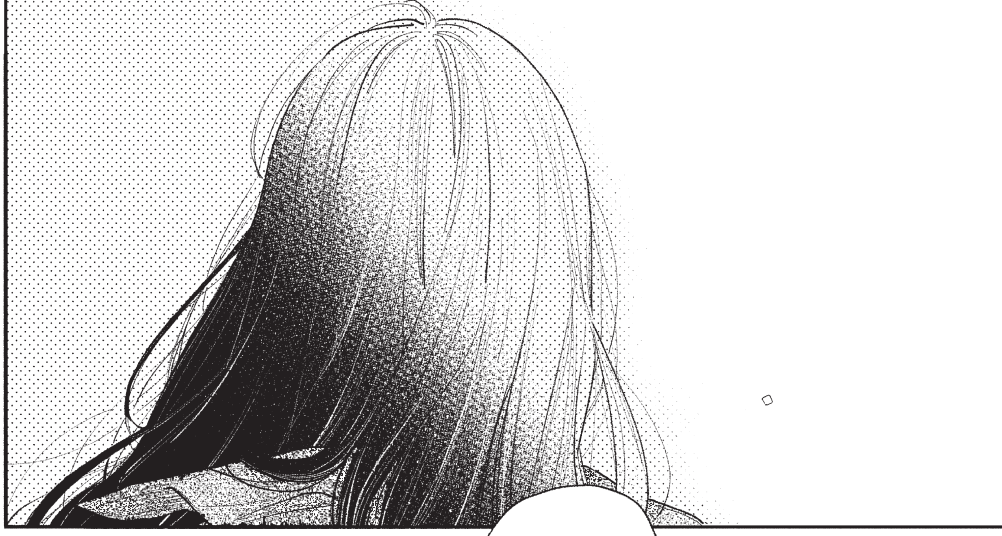


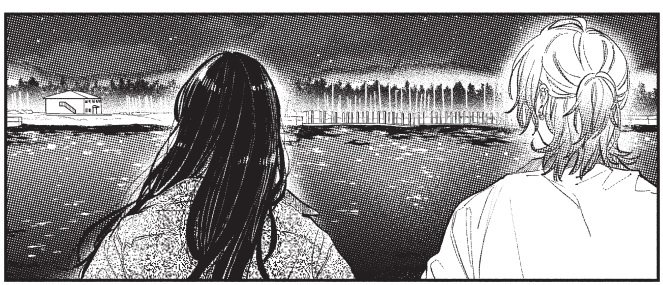


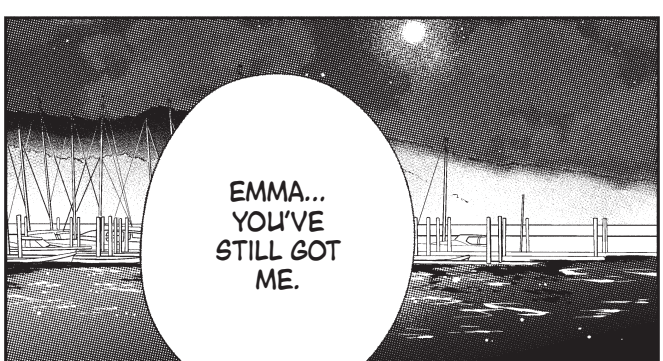

...
SHIN-CHAN, LATELY...
...YOU HAVEN'T BEEN DRINKING AT ALL.


IS SOMETHING GOING ON?
SSHHH


IT'S ITSU-KUN.
HE SAYS HE'S GOT A GIRLFRIEND.

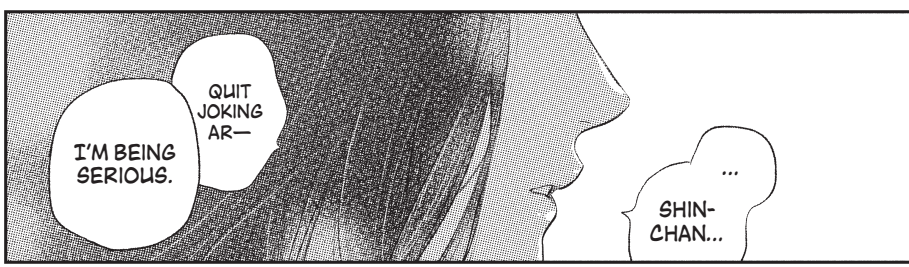

OH.

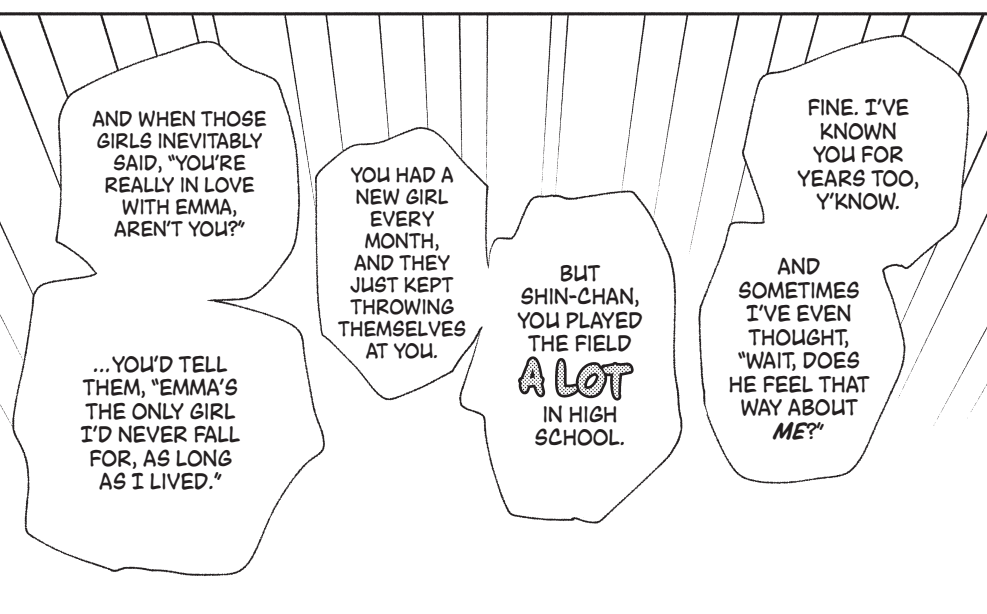


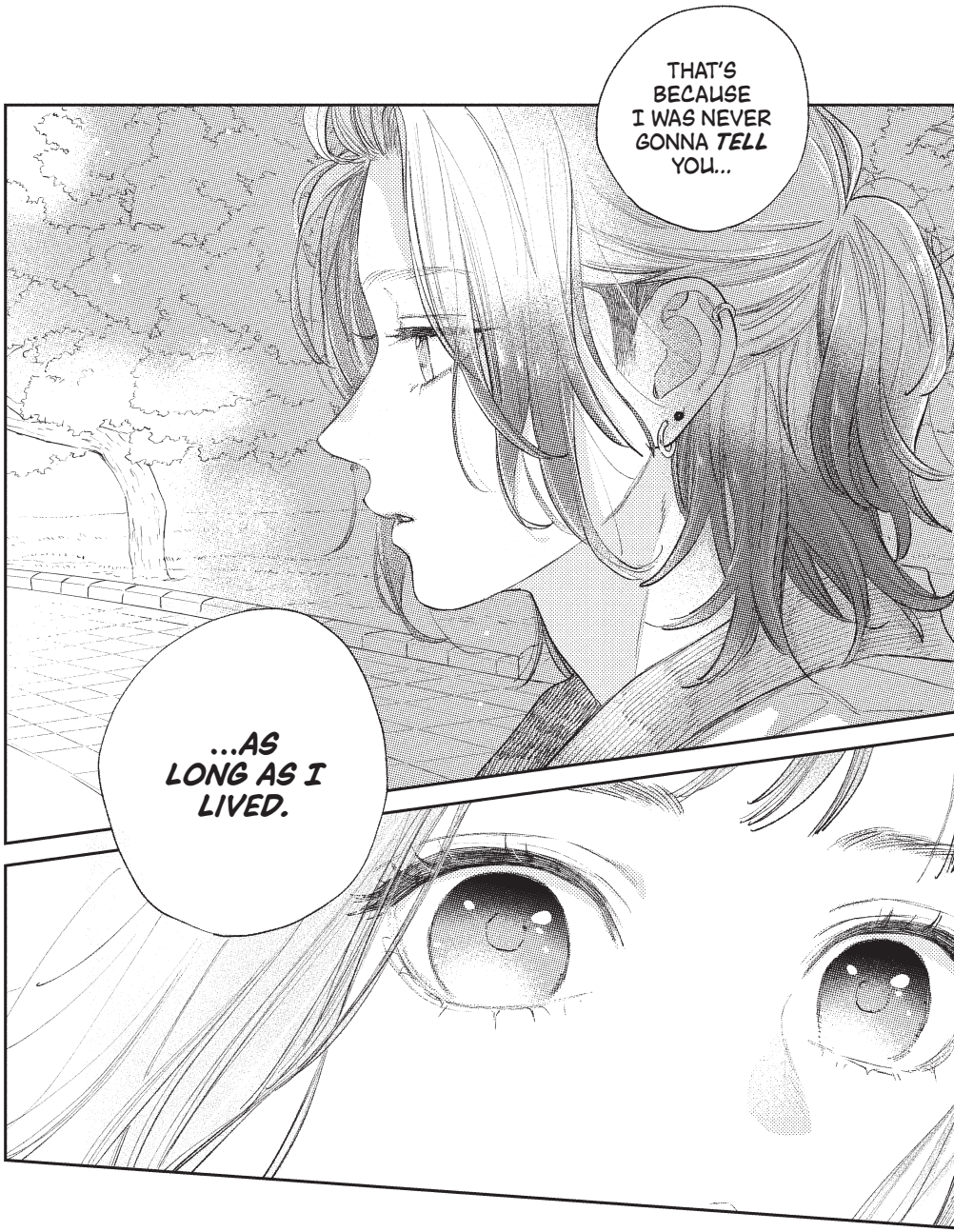

EMMA... YOU'VE STILL GOT ME.


...EMMA?
SHIN-CHAN... I'M SORRY.
I KNOW YOU WERE JUST THINKING OF MY FEELINGS.


CAN'T YOU GIVE ME A CHANCE?
AND I'M NOT SAYING THAT TO MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER.
IT'S WAY MORE... SELFISH THAN THAT.

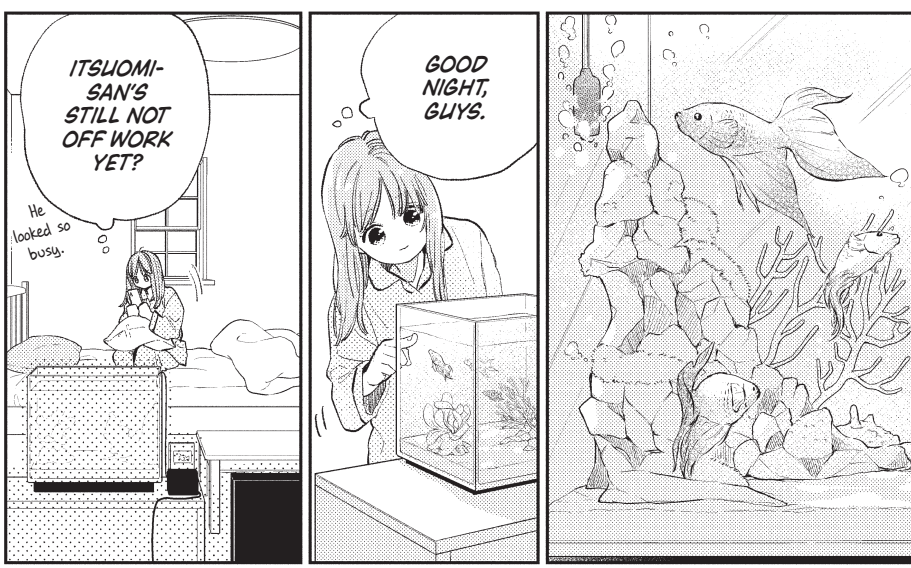

I'M BEING SERIOUS.
QUIT JOKING AR—
...
SHIN-CHAN...

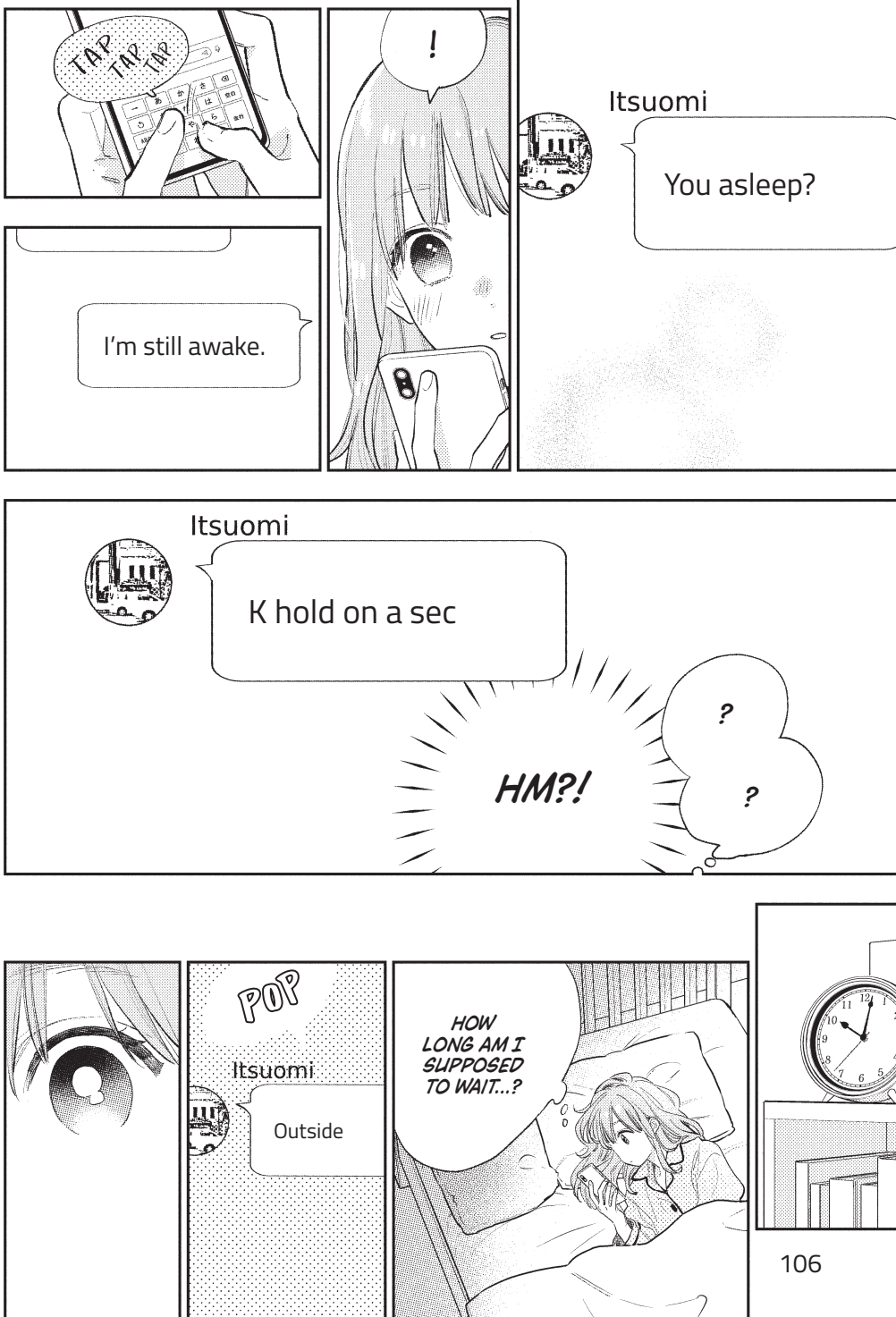

AND WHEN THOSE GIRLS INEVITABLY SAID, "YOU'RE REALLY IN LOVE WITH EMMA, AREN'T YOU?"
...YOU'D TELL THEM, "EMMA'S THE ONLY GIRL I'D NEVER FALL FOR, AS LONG AS I LIVED."
YOU HAD A NEW GIRL EVERY MONTH, AND THEY JUST KEPT THROWING THEMSELVES AT YOU.
BUT SHIN-CHAN, YOU PLAYED THE FIELD A LOT IN HIGH SCHOOL.
FINE. I'VE KNOWN YOU FOR YEARS TOO, Y'KNOW.
AND SOMETIMES I'VE EVEN THOUGHT, "WAIT, DOES HE FEEL THAT WAY ABOUT ME?"

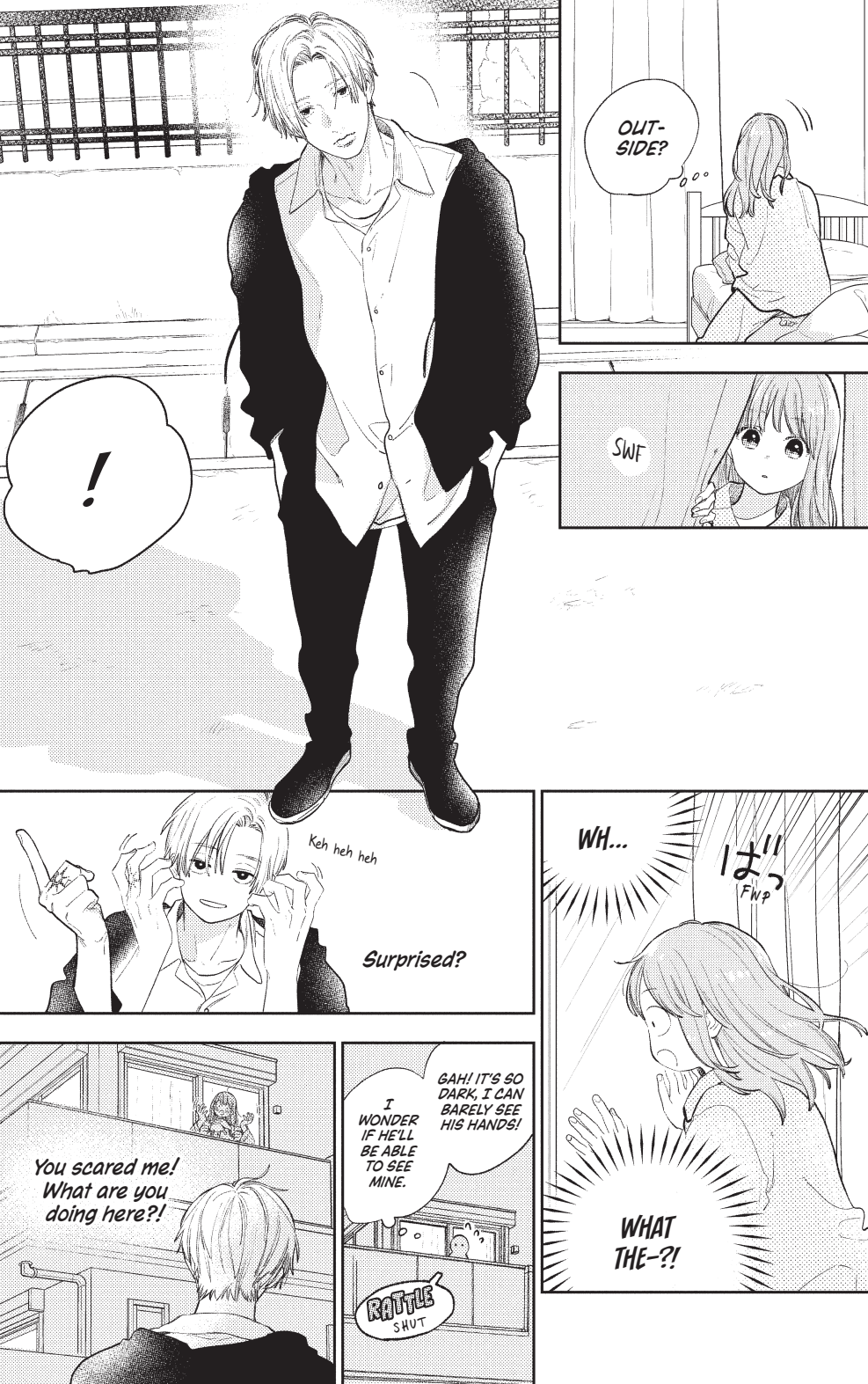

THAT'S BECAUSE I WAS NEVER GONNA *TELL* YOU...
...AS LONG AS I LIVED.



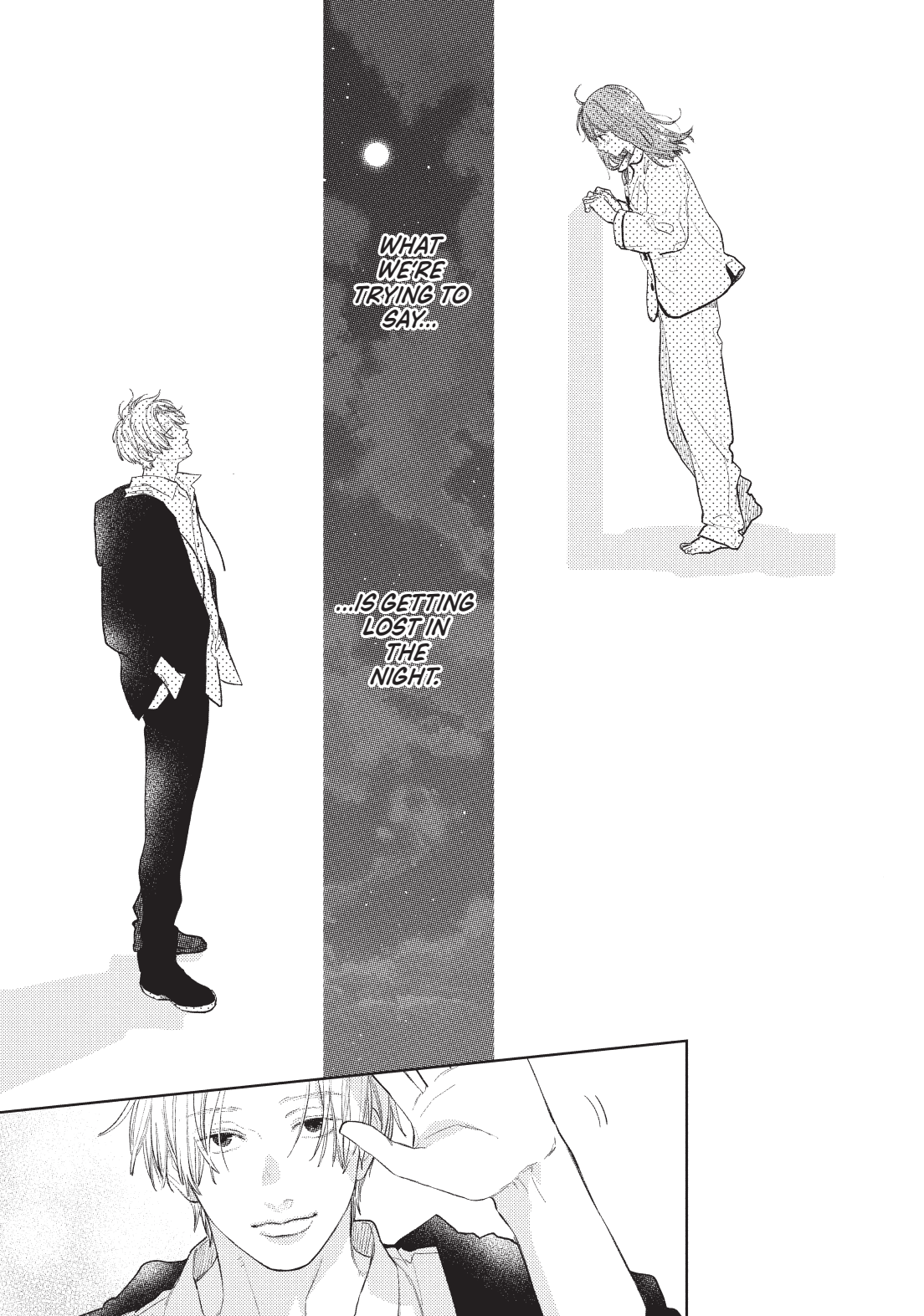

WHAAA-
AAAT?!
!!!???

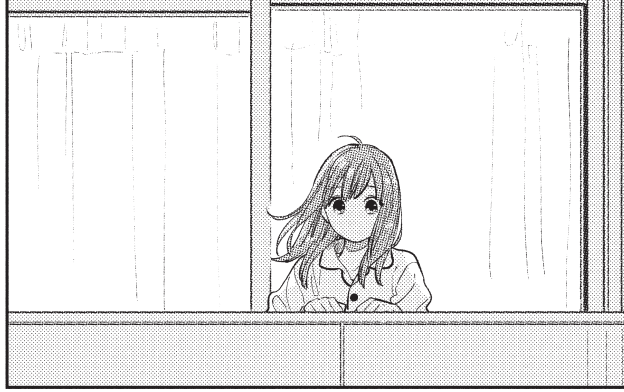

ITSUOMI-SAN'S STILL NOT OFF WORK YET?
He looked so busy.
GOOD NIGHT, GUYS.

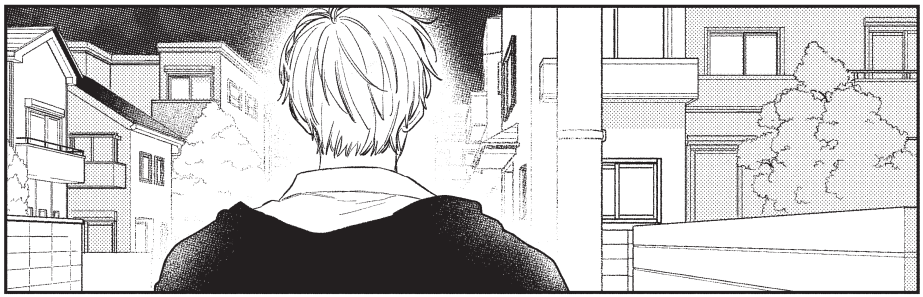

TAP TAP TAP
!
Itsuomi
You asleep?
I'm still awake.
Itsuomi
K hold on a sec
HM?!
?
?
POP
Itsuomi
Outside
HOW LONG AM I SUPPOSED TO WAIT...?

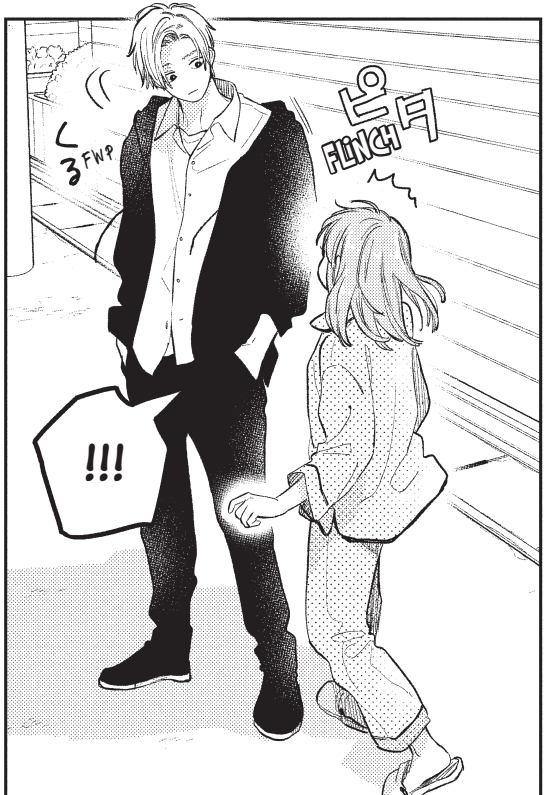

OUT-SIDE?
SWF
!
Keh heh heh
Surprised?
WH...
ばっ
FWP
WHAT THE-?!
You scared me! What are you doing here?!
I WONDER IF HE'LL BE ABLE TO SEE MINE.
GAH! IT'S SO DARK, I CAN BARELY SEE HIS HANDS!
RATTLE
SHUT

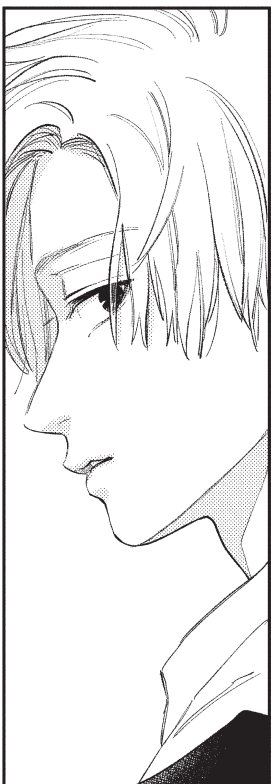

I'LL TRY SIGNING REAL BIG!
I'll come down!
?
OH CRAP, I'M BACKLIT.
LET'S SEE...
LEAVING? ALREADY?!
I COULDN'T QUITE SEE THAT LAST PART.
It's okay. I've got to go home—


WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO SAY...
...IS GETTING LOST IN THE NIGHT.

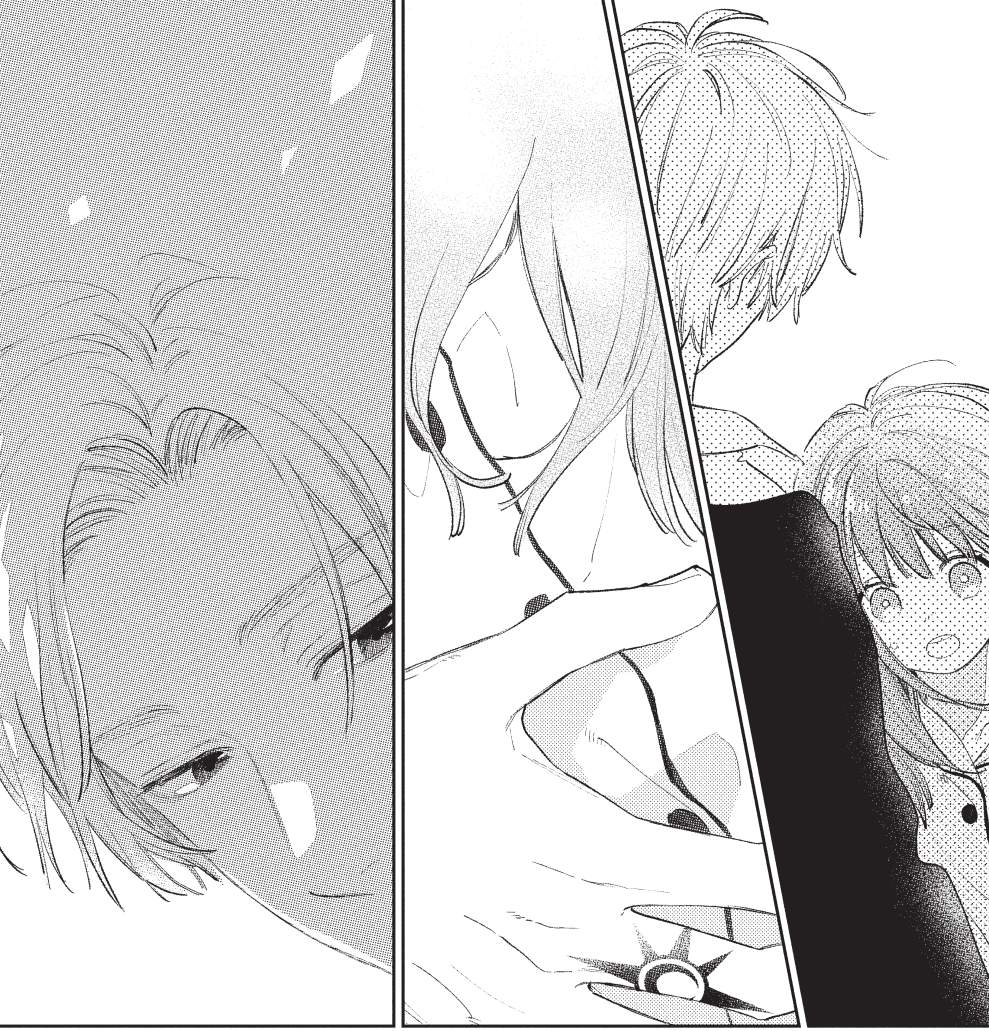


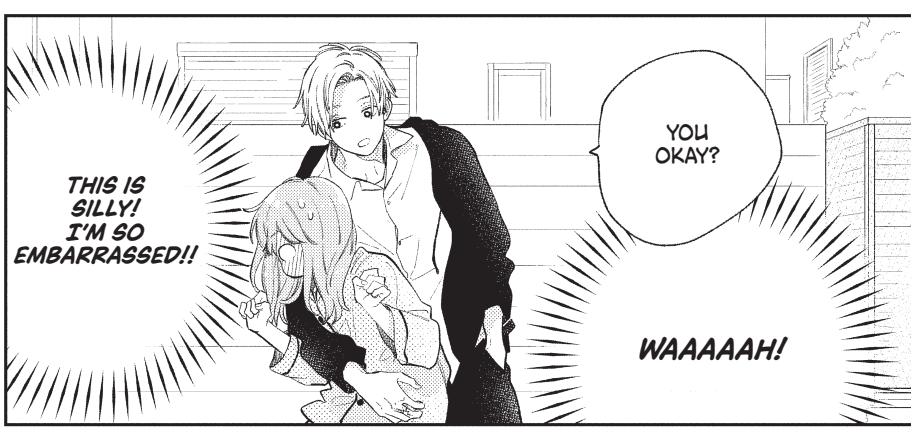


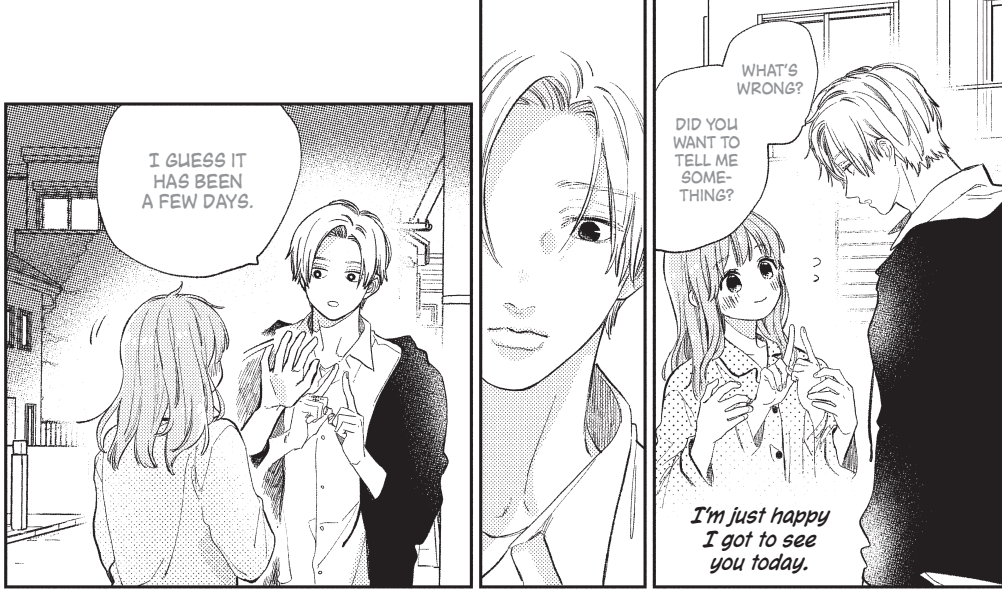

FLINCH
!!!

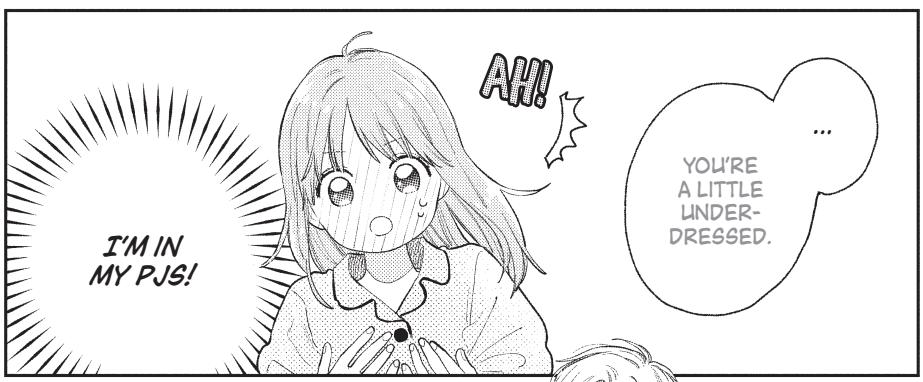






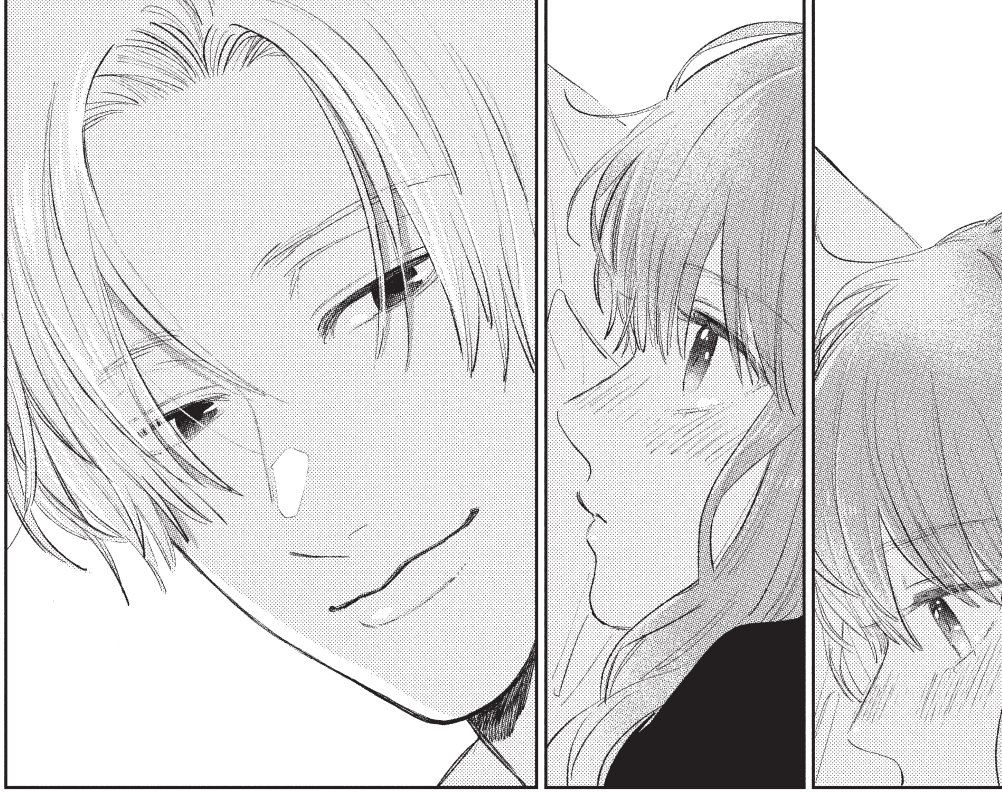

THIS IS SILLY! I'M SO EMBARRASSED!!
YOU OKAY?
WAAAAAH!

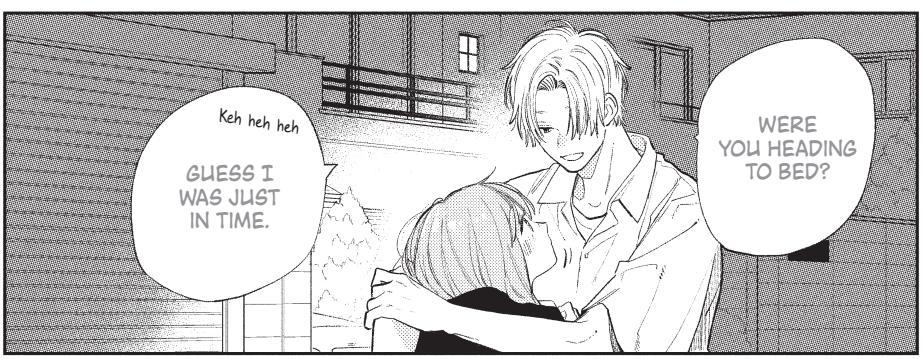

I GUESS IT HAS BEEN A FEW DAYS.
WHAT'S WRONG?
DID YOU WANT TO TELL ME SOME-THING?
I'm just happy I got to see you today.


AH!
I'M IN MY PJS!
...
YOU'RE A LITTLE UNDER-DRESSED.

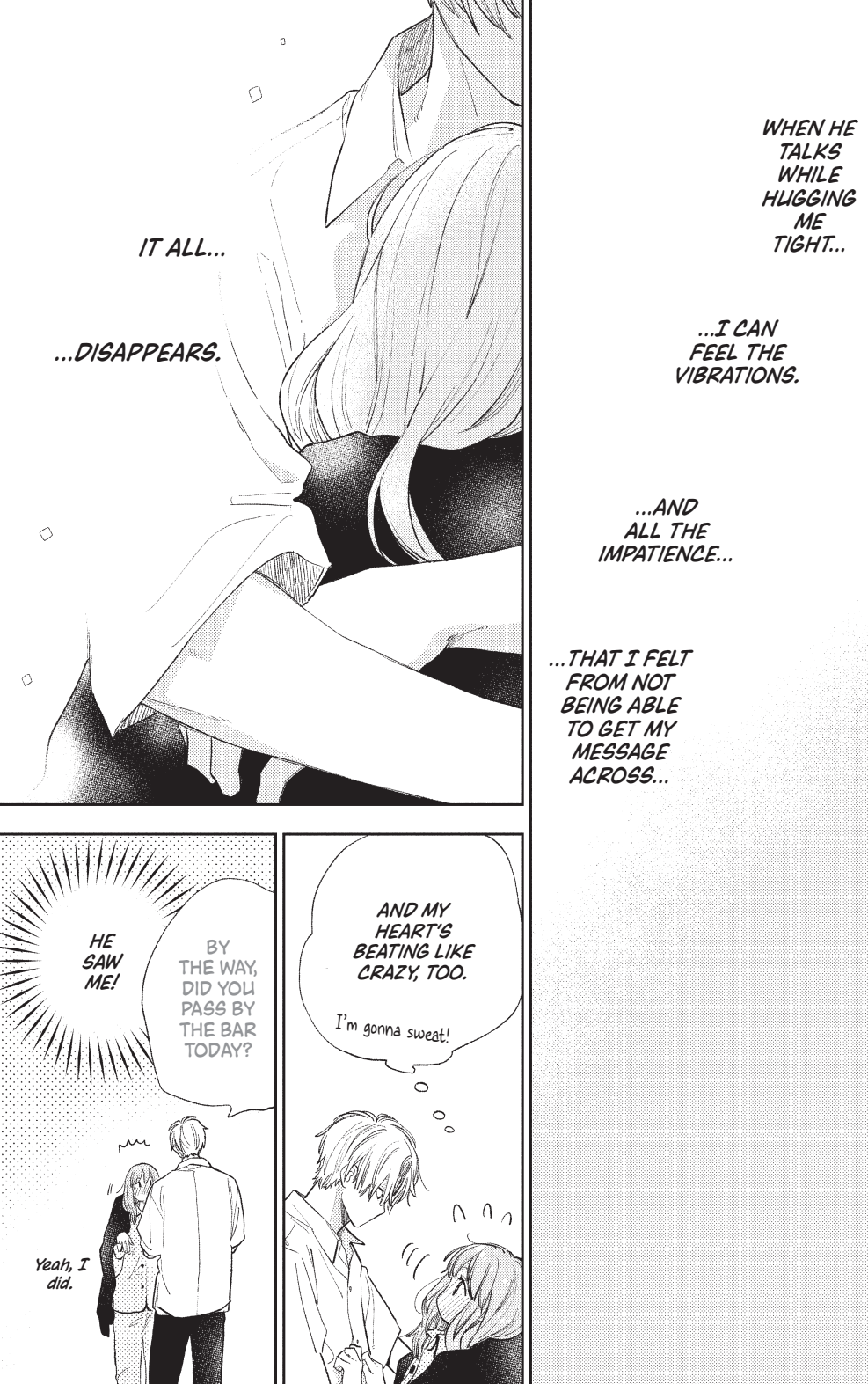

WHUF
ふわっ



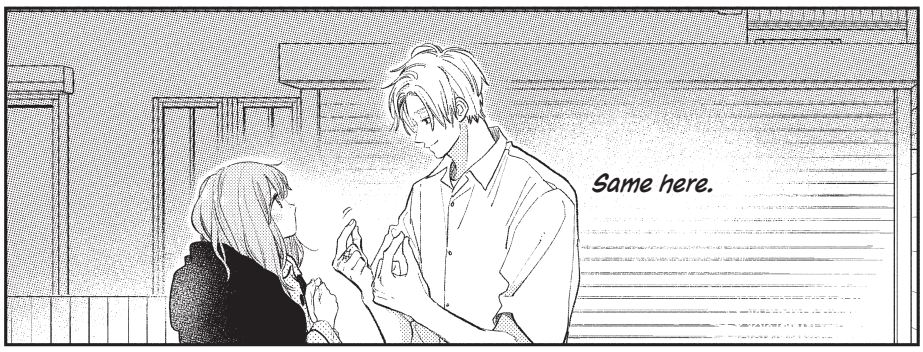



WERE YOU HEADING TO BED?
Keh heh heh
GUESS I WAS JUST IN TIME.


...BUT I GUESS IT'S GOT TO BE BRIGHT ENOUGH OUT, HUH?
...AT A DISTANCE, WHICH IS NICE...
YOU CAN USE SIGN LANGUAGE...


IT ALL...
...DISAPPEARS.
WHEN HE TALKS WHILE HUGGING ME TIGHT...
...I CAN FEEL THE VIBRATIONS.
...AND ALL THE IMPATIENCE...
...THAT I FELT FROM NOT BEING ABLE TO GET MY MESSAGE ACROSS...
AND MY HEART'S BEATING LIKE CRAZY, TOO.
I'm gonna sweat!
HE SAW ME!
BY THE WAY, DID YOU PASS BY THE BAR TODAY?
Yeah, I did.


I wanted to see your face, just a little.

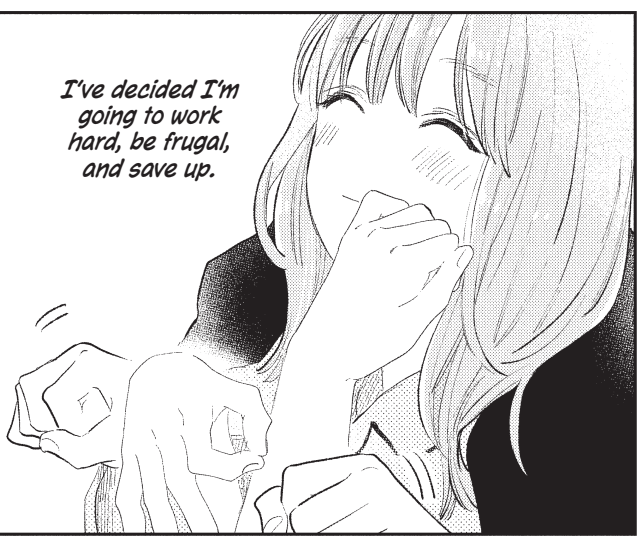

Same here.

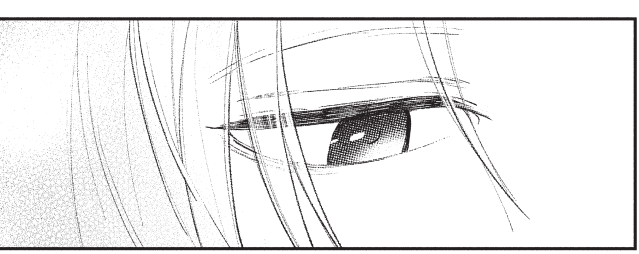

YEAH.
DRINK IT IN.


GO AHEAD AND LOOK.
WELL, HERE.
LOOM

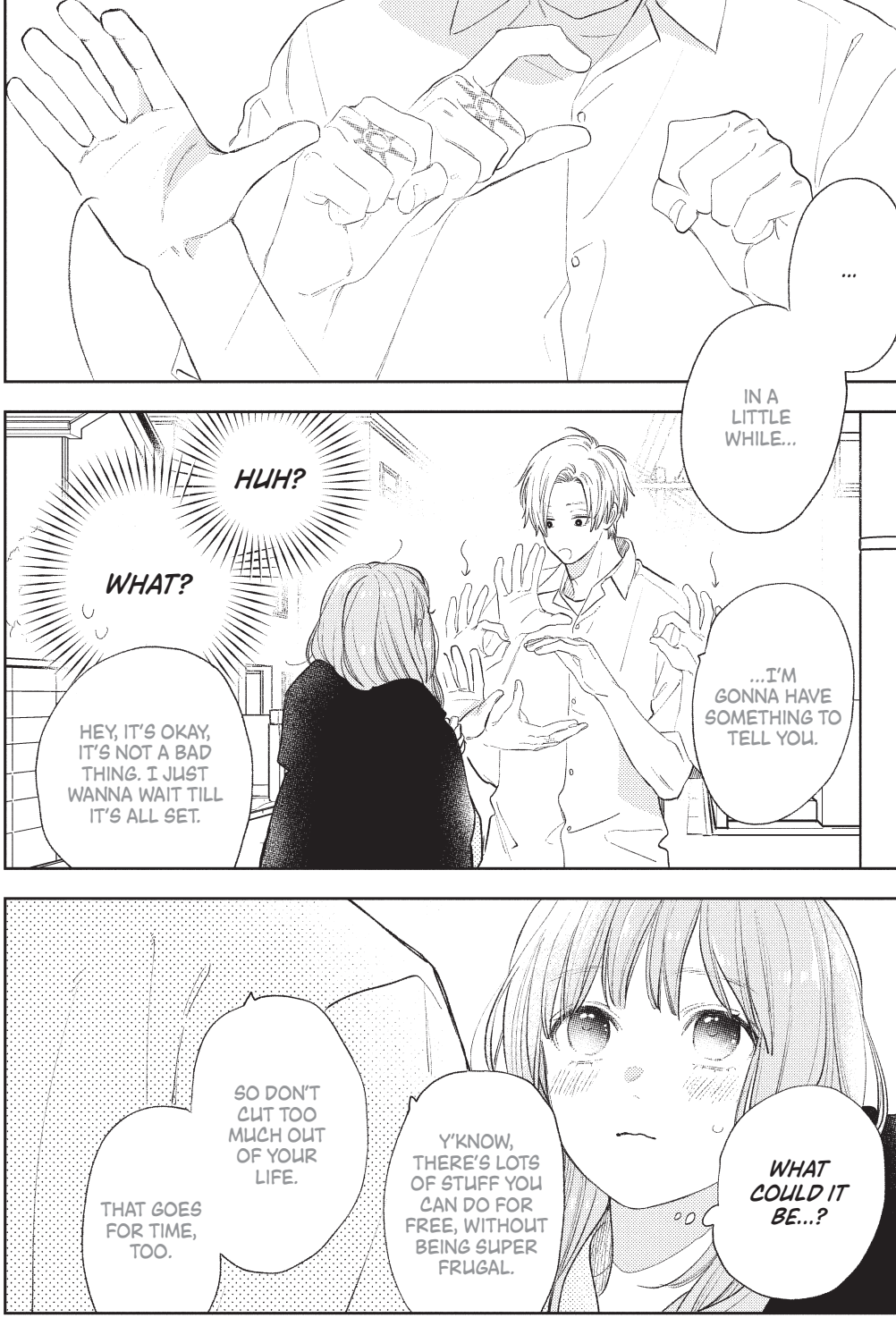

How was your first day at work?
I was nervous, but it was over in a flash.
YEAH? YOU DON'T SAY.

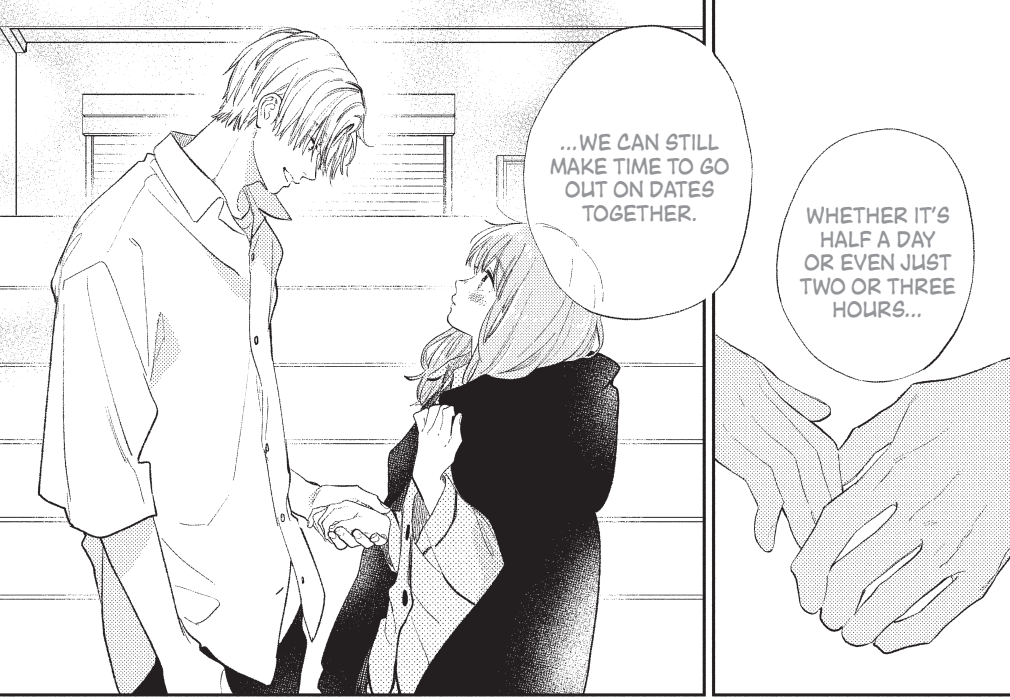

Keh heh heh.


I've decided I'm going to work hard, be frugal, and save up.

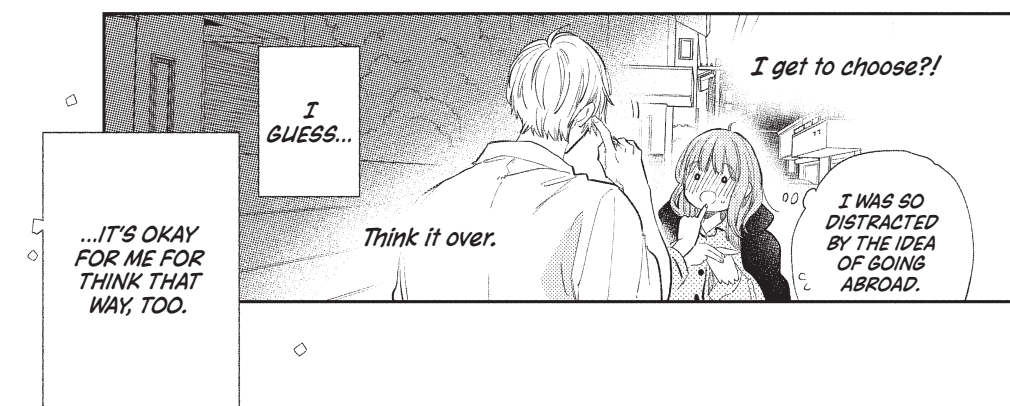



I WONDER IF THESE MOMENTS WE SPEND TOGETHER WILL SEEM MORE PRECIOUS FROM NOW ON...
WHAT IS IT?


...
IN A LITTLE WHILE...
...I'M GONNA HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL YOU.
HUH?
WHAT?
HEY, IT'S OKAY, IT'S NOT A BAD THING. I JUST WANNA WAIT TILL IT'S ALL SET.
WHAT COULD IT BE...?
Y'KNOW, THERE'S LOTS OF STUFF YOU CAN DO FOR FREE, WITHOUT BEING SUPER FRUGAL.
SO DON'T CUT TOO MUCH OUT OF YOUR LIFE.
THAT GOES FOR TIME, TOO.


...WE CAN STILL MAKE TIME TO GO OUT ON DATES TOGETHER.
WHETHER IT'S HALF A DAY OR EVEN JUST TWO OR THREE HOURS...


WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?
WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO, YUKI?
OH, AND SINCE WE STARTED GOING OUT...
...WE HAVEN'T MADE PLANS TO GO SOMEWHERE, JUST THE TWO OF US.


I GUESS...
I get to choose?!
I WAS SO DISTRACTED BY THE IDEA OF GOING ABROAD.
Think it over.
...IT'S OKAY FOR ME FOR THINK THAT WAY, TOO.



WHAT DO I DO...?

WHERE SHOULD WE GO...

...JUST THE TWO OF US?

Sign.20

A Destination Together




AFTER THAT, WE BOTH MOVED SOME THINGS AROUND AND CARVED OUT FOUR HOURS IN THE MORNING THE FOLLOWING WEEKEND...
...TO GO OUT ON A DATE.
WE DON'T WANT TO WASTE A LOT OF TIME TRAVELING, SO IT HAS TO BE SOMEPLACE CLOSE BY.
A CAFÉ...? I WONDER HOW ITSUOMI-SAN FEELS ABOUT SWEETS.
WHERE DO YOU TAKE SOMEONE WHO'S BEEN ALL AROUND THE WORLD...?
CINEMA crew
CAFE WALKER

Rin

A date??! NICE! ♡
So u want ideas on where to go...?

Rin

Wait, actually doesn't he seem like the type of guy who can have fun anywhere?

SHE'S GOT A POINT.

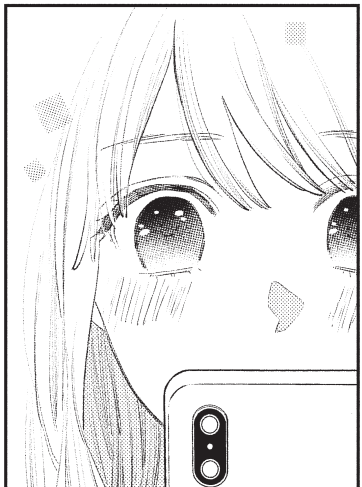
OH.

IT'S RIN-CHAN.

Rin

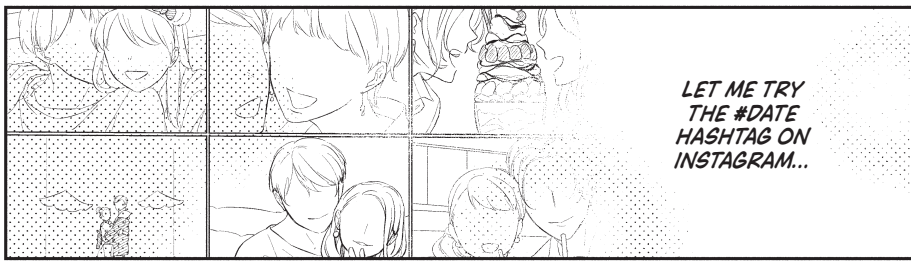
I think he'll want to see YOU have fun, Yuki!

!

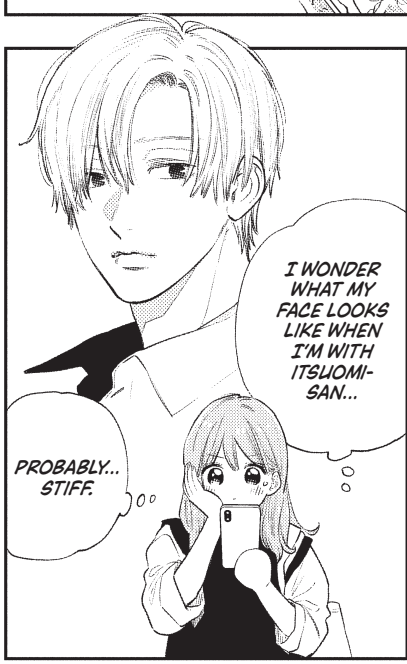


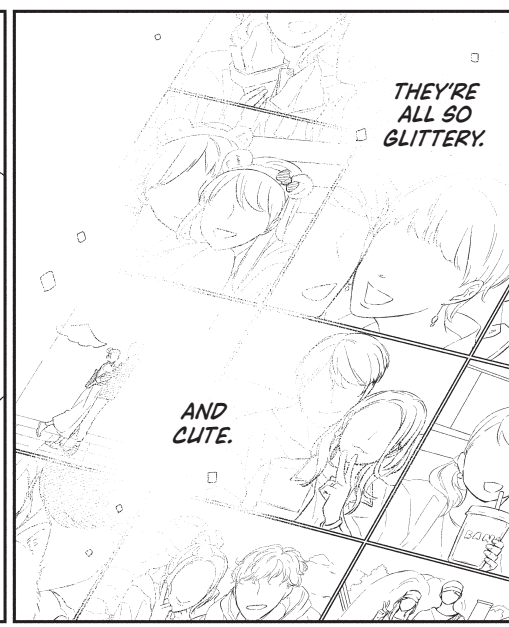




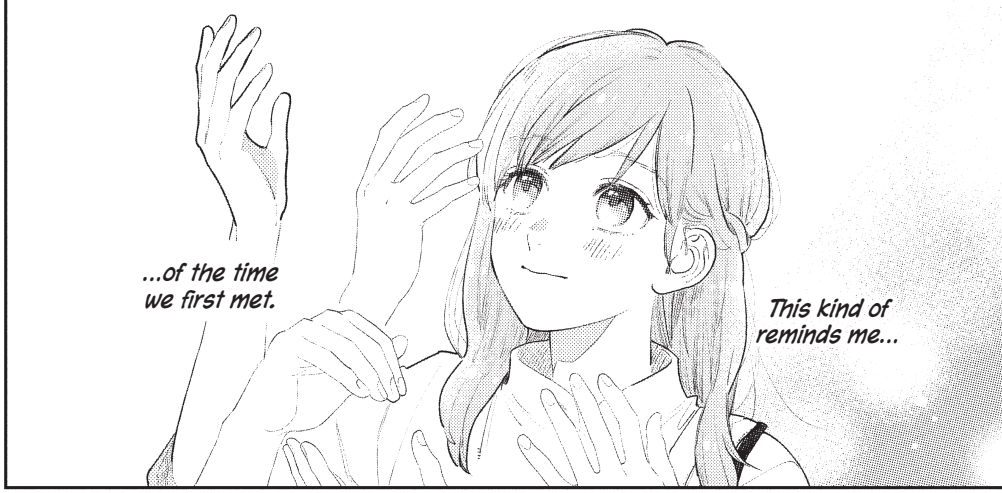

LET ME TRY THE #DATE HASHTAG ON INSTAGRAM...


ALL THESE GIRLS LOOK SO HAPPY WITH THEIR BOYFRIENDS.
I WONDER WHAT CAMERA APP THEY'RE USING.
EVERYONE TAKES SUCH GOOD PHOTOS.


I WONDER WHAT MY FACE LOOKS LIKE WHEN I'M WITH ITSUOMI-SAN...
PROBABLY... STIFF.


THEY'RE ALL SO GLITTERY.
AND CUTE.


WHERE...
...DO I WANT TO GO...?
IT'S PRETTY EMPTY TODAY.
It's still about 15 mins away.
OH.
GOT IT.
?

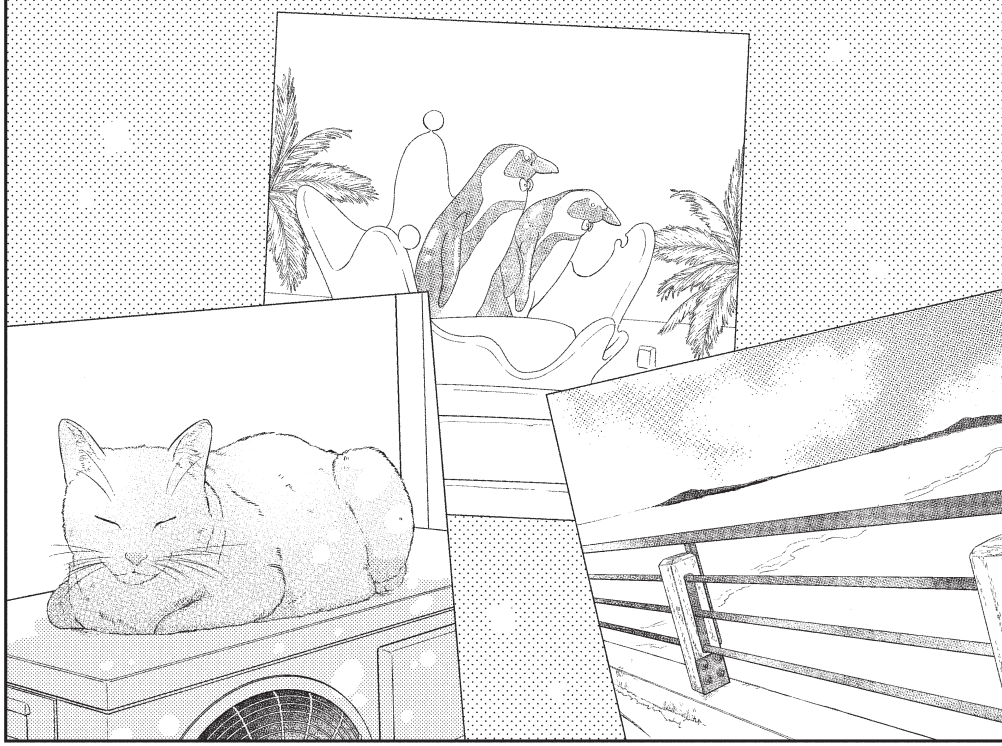

...of the time we first met.
This kind of reminds me...

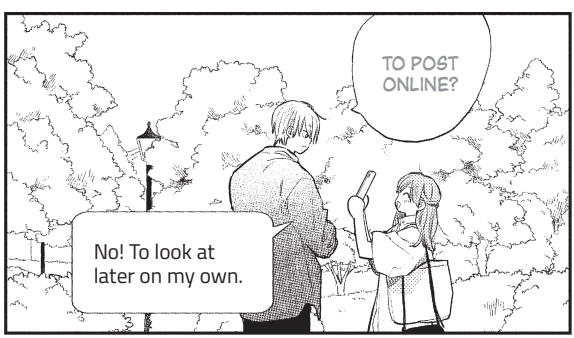

"Oh, I was on the train that time, too."

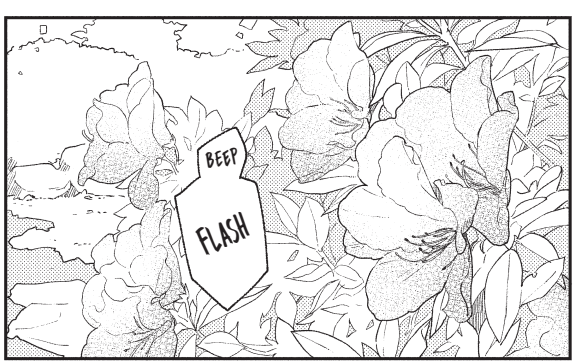

I was thinking...

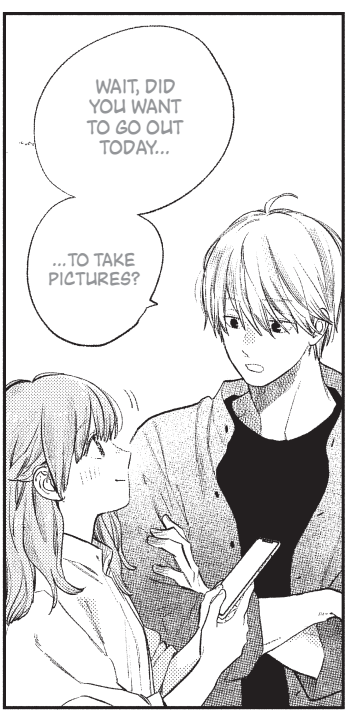

THAT DAY...
...WE JUST HAPPENED TO BE ON THE SAME TRAIN...
...BUT TODAY, WE GOT ON TOGETHER...
IT WAS THE MIDDLE OF WINTER.
THAT WAS A COLD DAY, RIGHT?
YOU'RE RIGHT.

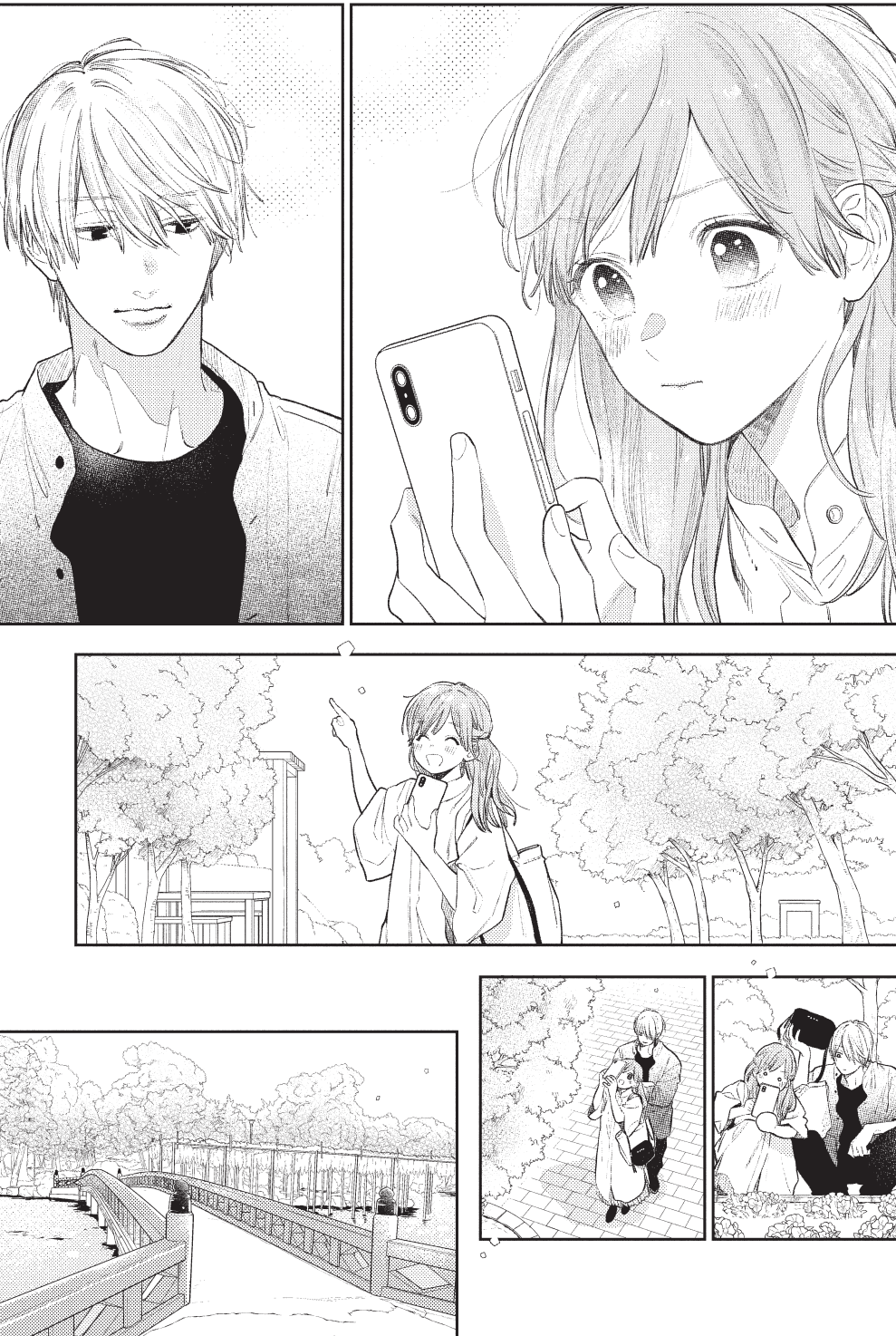

さくさく
ZOOM ZOOM
WHAT'S AROUND HERE, AGAIN?
くるっ
TWIRL
YOU'RE ALL PUMPED.
Keh heh heh.
...HEADING TO THE SAME DESTINATION.
IS THIS THE PLACE?
駅
station
RURUROOM
RURUROOM
BEEP FLASH
BEEP FLASH
BEEP FLASH
SWF
ちっ




TO POST ONLINE?
No! To look at later on my own.


BEEP
FLASH

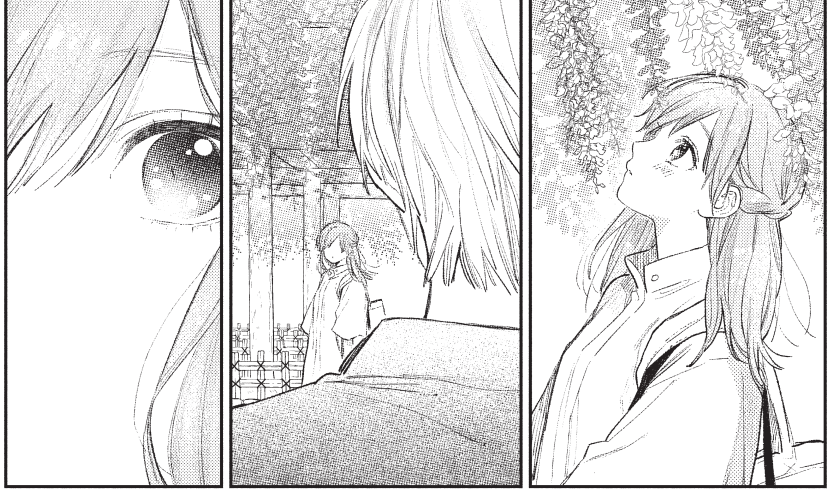

WAIT, DID YOU WANT TO GO OUT TODAY...
...TO TAKE PICTURES?




OOH. WISTERIA.
I DIDN'T KNOW THEY WERE IN BLOOM RIGHT NOW.
MM, THE FLOWERS SMELL INCREDIBLE.

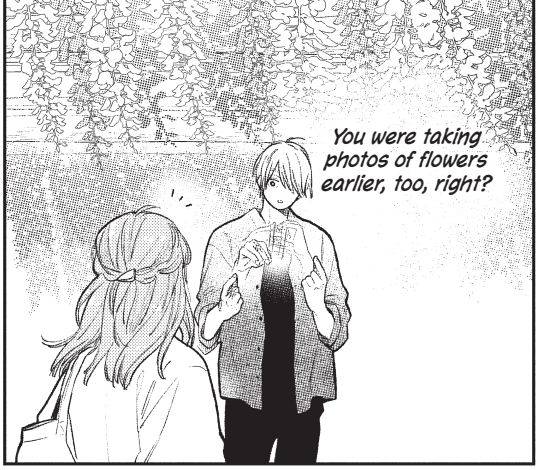


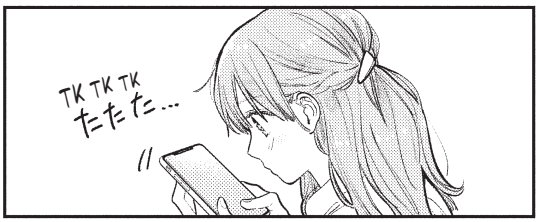


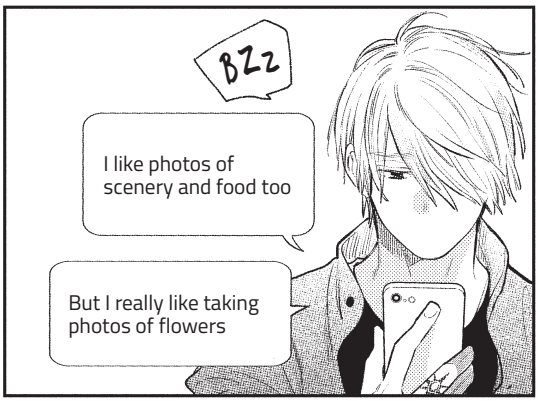


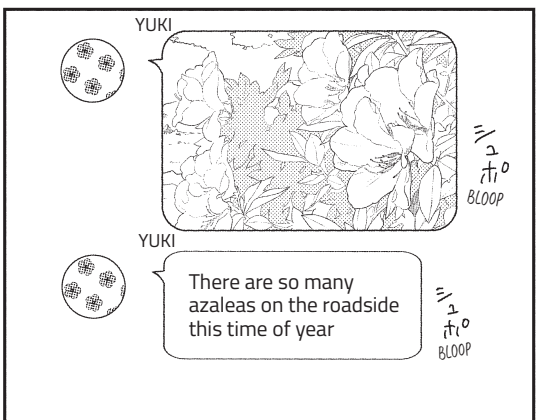



THIS MUST BE IT.
...WHAT THEY MEAN WHEN THEY SAY, "THAT MOMENT...
...TOOK MY BREATH AWAY."


You were taking photos of flowers earlier, too, right?


TK TK TK
たたた…

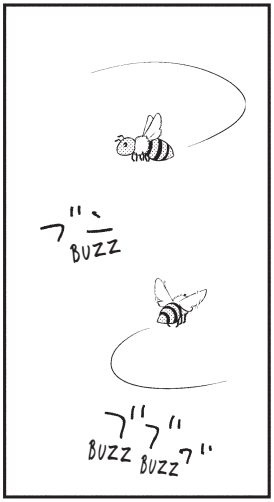

BZZ
I like photos of scenery and food too
But I really like taking photos of flowers

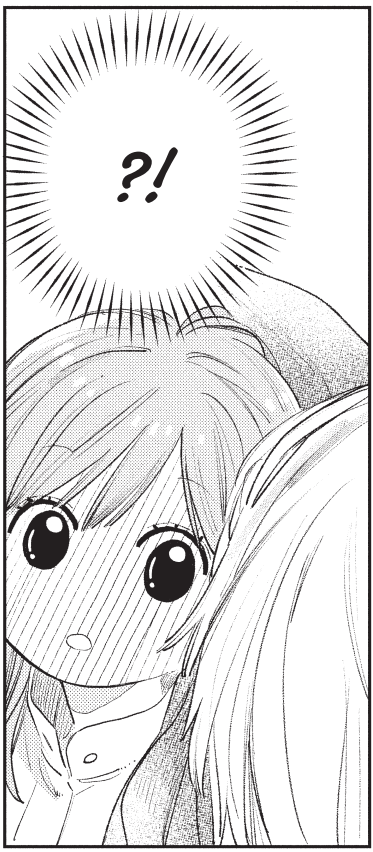

YUKI
ピコン
BLOOP
YUKI
There are so many azaleas on the roadside this time of year
ピコン
BLOOP

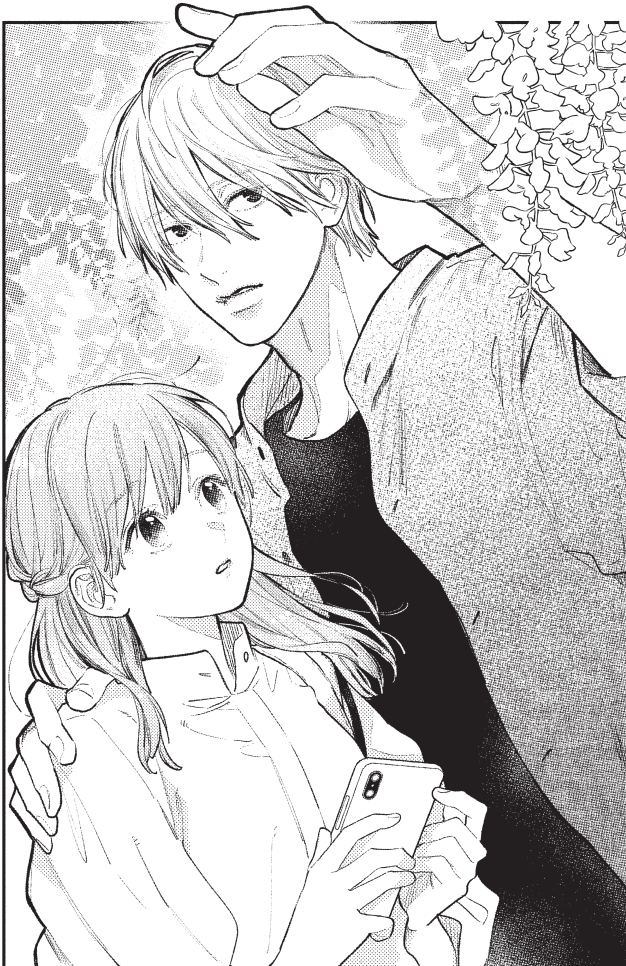

THE COLORS OF THE WISTERIA...
...THE SUN AND SHADOW SCATTERED ON HIS FACE...
...AND THE CALMING BREEZE. PUT IT ALL TOGETHER...
...AND IT FEELS LIKE A DREAM.


Next the sunflowers will throw open their petals
as if satisfying an impatient yearning
The hydrangea will bloom, too
soaking up the raindrops.
Now, the wisteria hangs from the openings to the sky
And very soon
!
each seem to wait for their season and their turn to come
It's so cute how the flowers


ブーン
BUZZ


ブーン
BUZZ
ブーブーン
BUZZ BUZZ


?!




THAT SCARED ME.
I HAVE TO WATCH OUT FOR BEES.
THADUMP
ドキ
ドキ
THADUMP
THE BEES ARE REALLY SWARMING.
Honeybees.
BEES?
BUT YOU MAKE ME REALIZE WHY THEY'VE INSPIRED SO MUCH POETRY.
I ALWAYS LIKED THE SEASONS IN JAPAN.
LET ME SEE THAT.
CAMERA
...IS THE WORLD THROUGH YOUR EYES, YUKI?
SO THIS...


I WONDER IF THE FLOWERS WILL SHOW UP OKAY.
OH...
A PHOTO... TOGETHER.
OH.

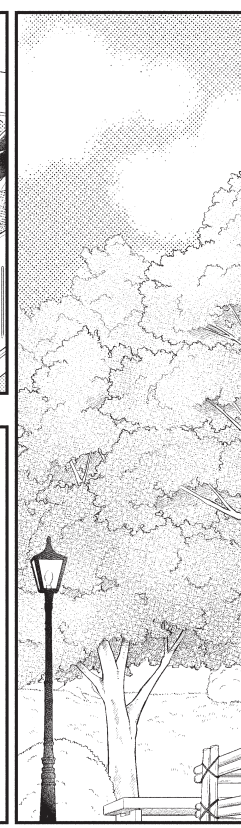

...TWO...
THREE...
GLANCE
3, 2, 1. OKAY?
WE SHOULD DO A COUNT-DOWN.
...ONE...

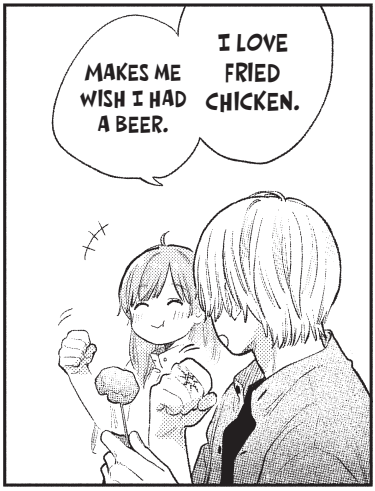

STARE
OH!
MY FIRST PHOTO WITH ITSUOMI-SAN...
I'M BLUSHING SOOOOO MUCH!
Albums

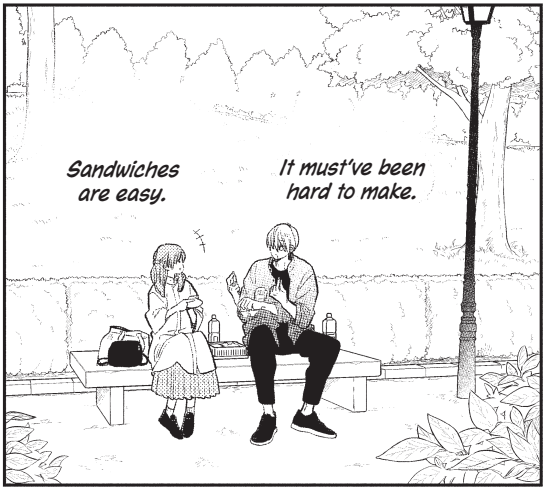

THERE'S SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT PHOTOS TAKEN WITH THE GUY YOU LIKE...
NO WONDER SO MANY GIRLS POST PHOTOS LIKE THAT TO SOCIAL MEDIA.

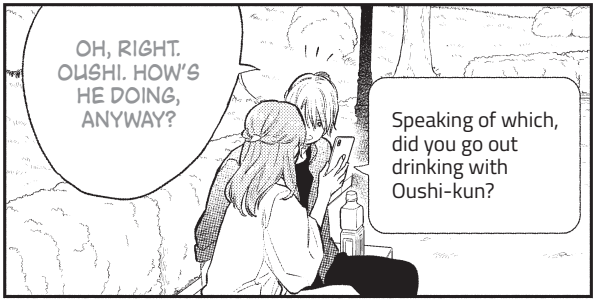

SELFIES TOGETHER ARE NICE. I COULD GET USED TO THIS.
I'LL SEND IT TO ITSUOMI-SAN, TOO.


もぐ CHEW
THIS IS DELICIOUS.
もぐ CHEW



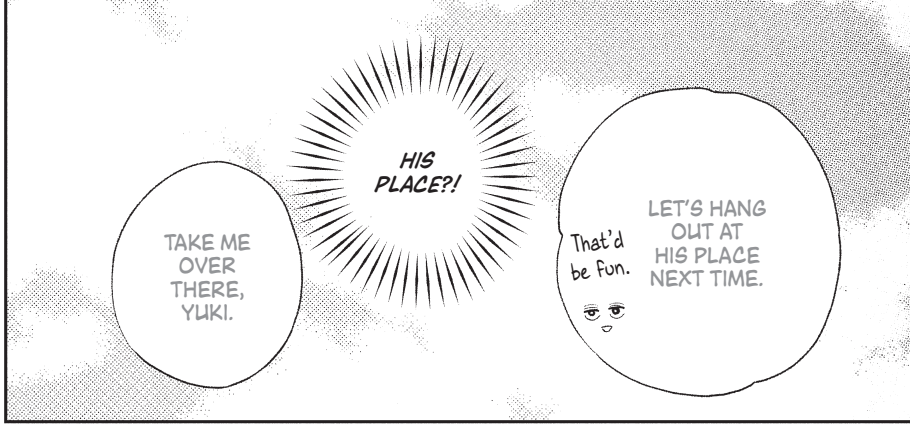

I LOVE FRIED CHICKEN.
MAKES ME WISH I HAD A BEER.


Sandwiches are easy.
It must've been hard to make.

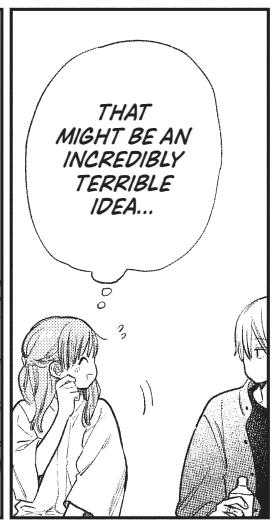

OH, RIGHT. OUSHI. HOW'S HE DOING, ANYWAY?
Speaking of which, did you go out drinking with Oushi-kun?


...
もぐもぐ CHEW CHEW
...

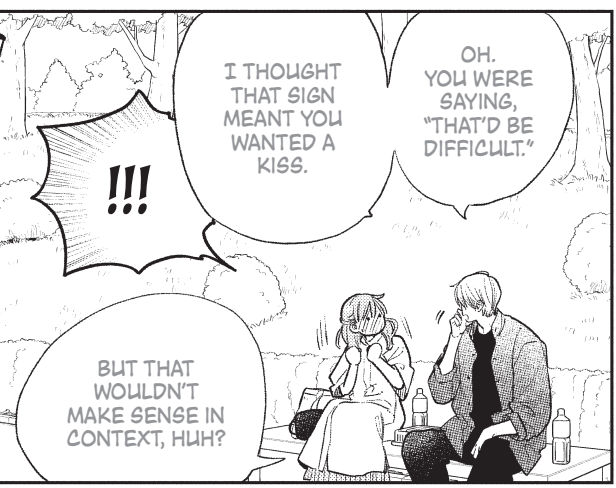

HOW QUICKLY THEY WHAT?!
I BET YOU WERE SURPRISED HOW QUICKLY WE HIT IT OFF.
NO, THAT CAN'T BE. I'M SURE ITSUOMI-SAN JUST DRAGGED OUSHI-KUN SOMEWHERE AND GOT CARRIED AWAY...

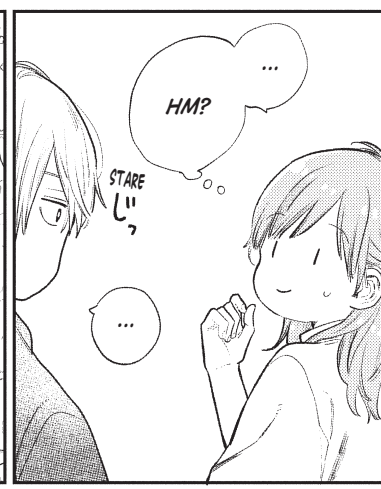

TAKE ME OVER THERE, YUKI.
HIS PLACE?!
LET'S HANG OUT AT HIS PLACE NEXT TIME.
That'd be fun.



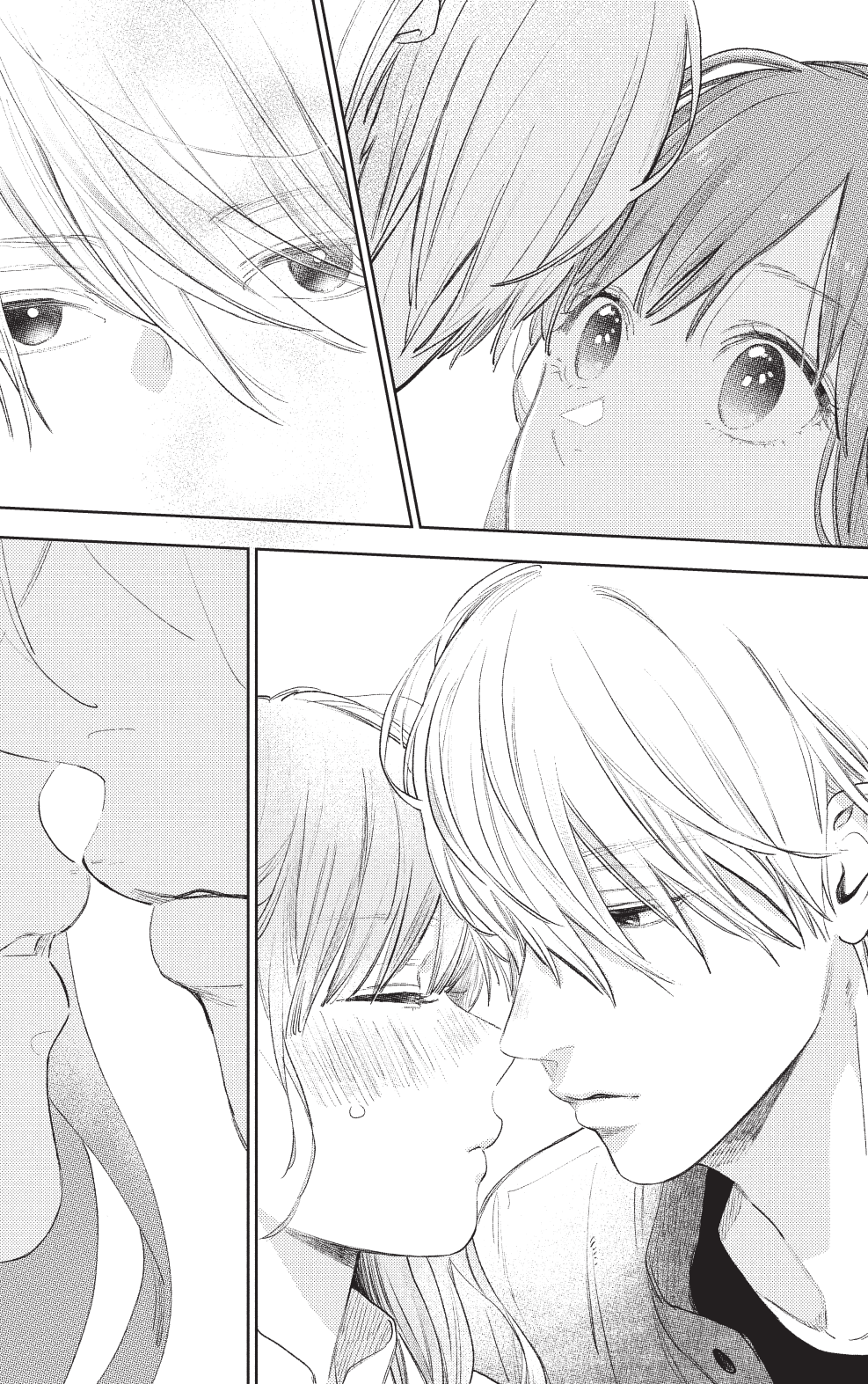

THAT MIGHT BE AN INCREDIBLY TERRIBLE IDEA...


...did you bring him here?
Why the hell...

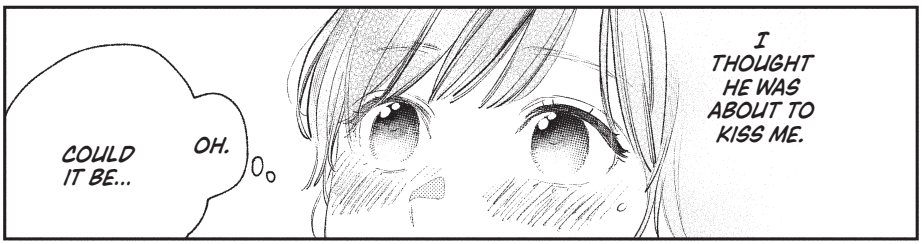

!!!
I THOUGHT THAT SIGN MEANT YOU WANTED A KISS.
OH. YOU WERE SAYING, "THAT'D BE DIFFICULT."
BUT THAT WOULDN'T MAKE SENSE IN CONTEXT, HUH?

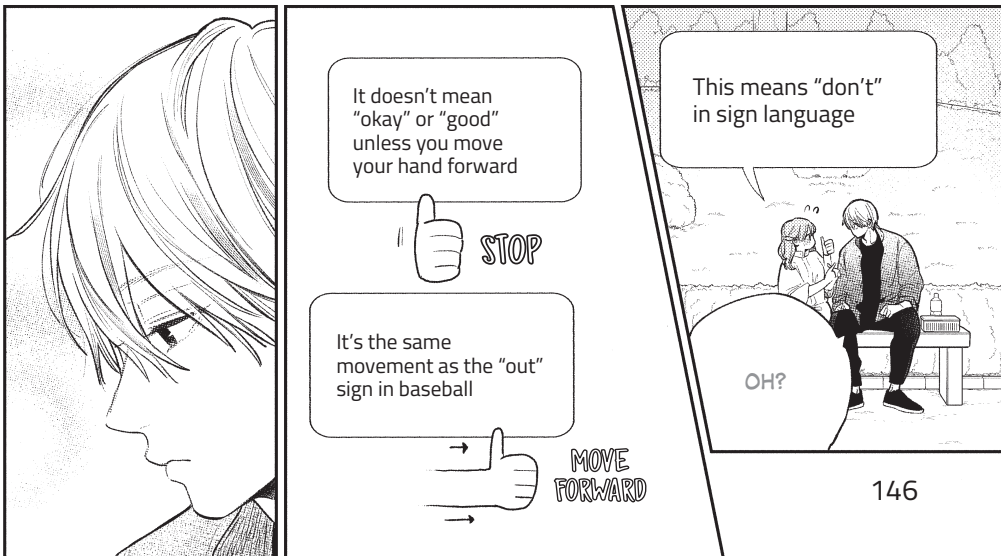

...
HM?
STARE
...

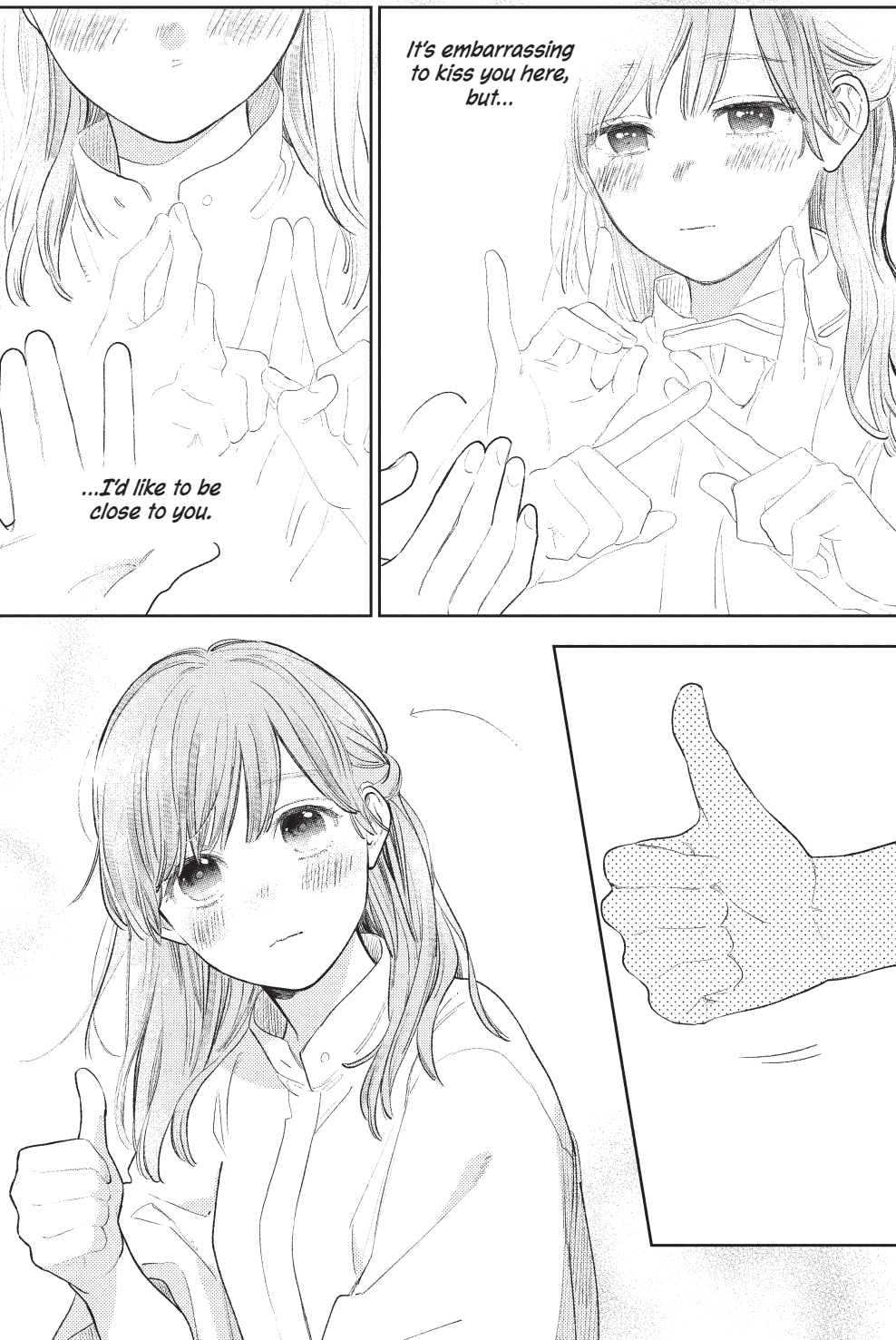

A KISS? OUT HERE?!
SFF
THADUMP
ドキッ
!




I GUESS IT REALLY WOULD BE WEIRD TO KISS YOU NOW, HUH?
...

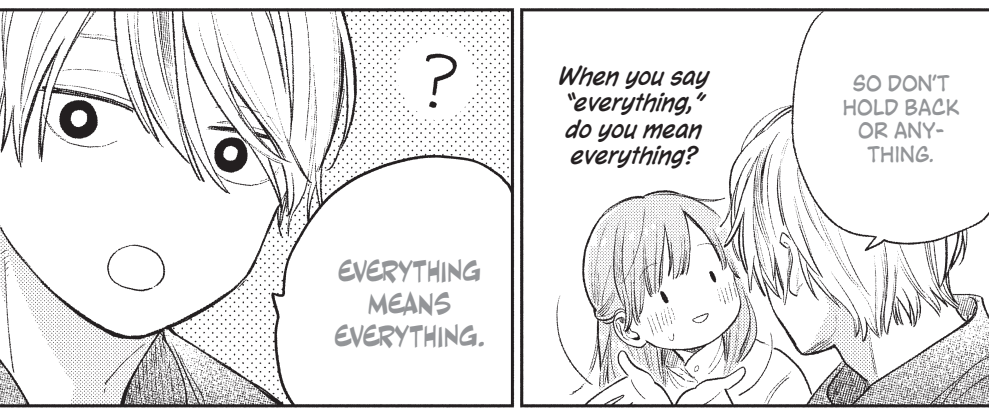

I THOUGHT HE WAS ABOUT TO KISS ME.
OH.
COULD IT BE...


It doesn't mean "okay" or "good" unless you move your hand forward
STOP
It's the same movement as the "out" sign in baseball
MOVE FORWARD
This means "don't" in sign language
OH?

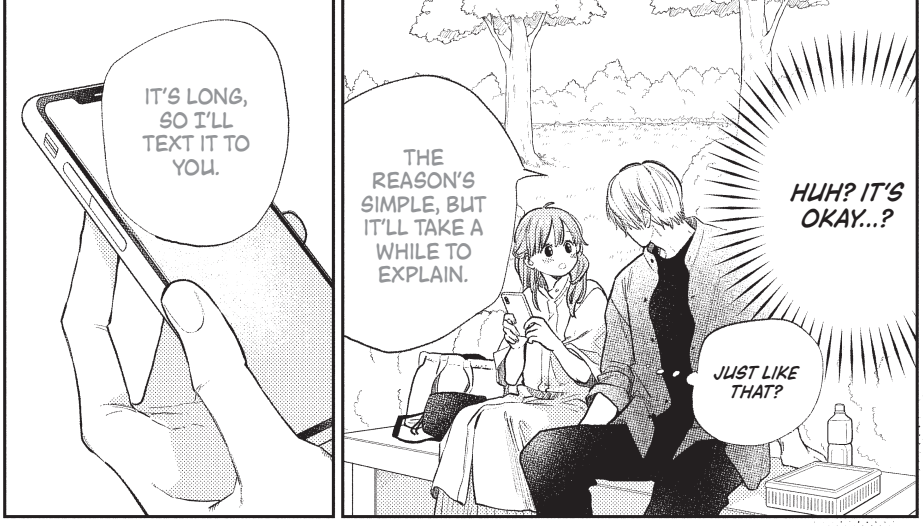

It's embarrassing to kiss you here, but...
...I'd like to be close to you.


PLUNK
ぷの
と


I'm okay with everything, as long as it's with you.
You told me this before, Yuki...
トン
TAP
...but it goes for me, too.


?
EVERYTHING MEANS EVERYTHING.
When you say "everything," do you mean everything?
SO DON'T HOLD BACK OR ANY-THING.


Well before, it seemed like you didn't want to tell me why you go overseas so often
OH, THAT? I'LL TELL YOU IF YOU WANT TO KNOW.
You're a very mysterious person, Itsuomi-san
I AM?
I'm sure there are some things you don't want to talk about
I DUNNO ABOUT THAT.


IT'S LONG, SO I'LL TEXT IT TO YOU.
THE REASON'S SIMPLE, BUT IT'LL TAKE A WHILE TO EXPLAIN.
HUH? IT'S OKAY...?
JUST LIKE THAT?


IN A LITTLE WHILE...
...I'M GONNA HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL YOU.
WILL HE REALLY TELL ME ANYTHING I ASK NOW?
WHAT ABOUT THAT THING THE OTHER NIGHT...?


HIS THUMBS WOULD PAUSE FROM TIME TO TIME AS HE TEXTED QUICKLY.
DILIGENTLY THINKING OF WHAT HE WANTED TO WRITE.

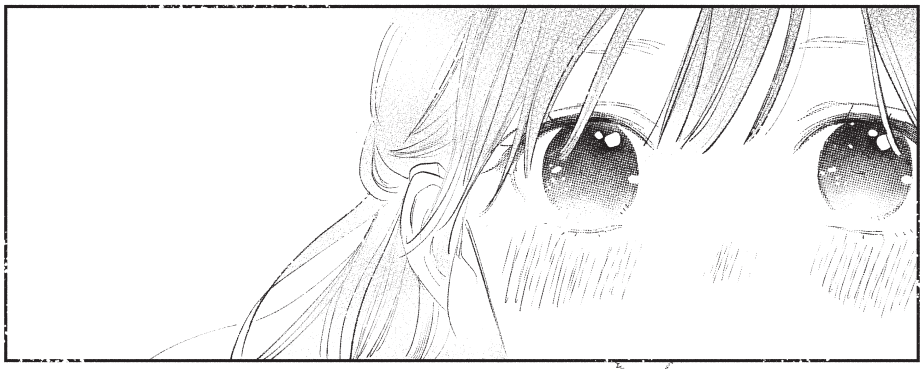

NO. IT'S PROBABLY BEST...
...FOR ME TO WAIT UNTIL HE BRINGS THAT UP AGAIN.

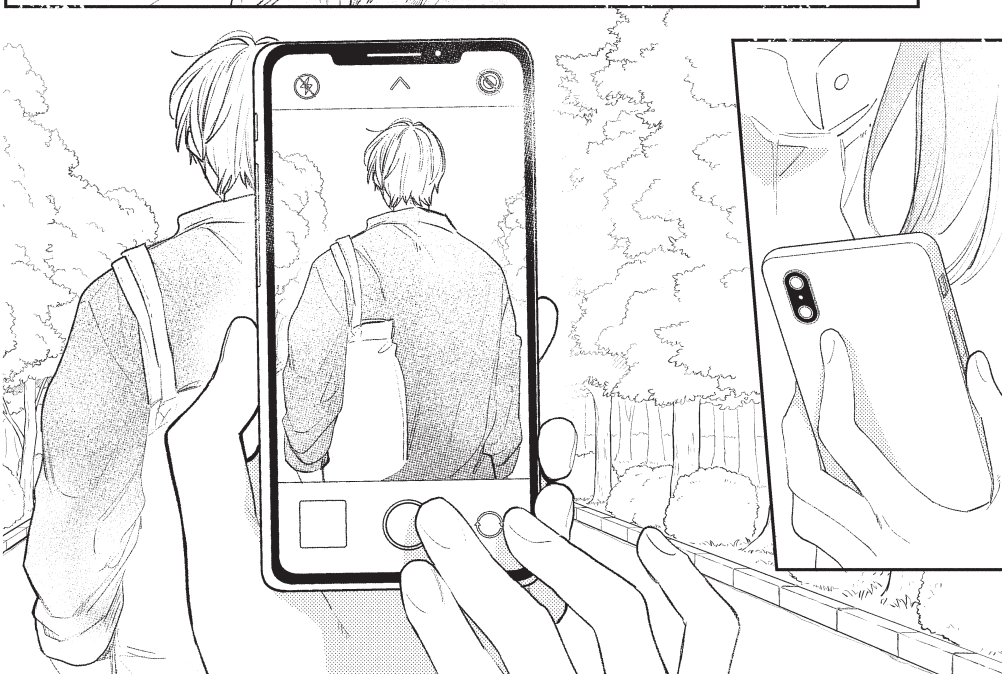

HERE IT IS.
THADUMP
ドキ
ドキ
THADUMP
IS HE STILL...
...GETTING VISITS FROM EMMA-SAN?
Itsuomi
As a boy, I used to love means of transport, especially airplanes.
The planes at the airport
WHOA. HE REALLY DID WRITE AN ESSAY.
?!
すSWF
つく
OKAY.
WANNA GET GOING?
A LITTLE BOY WHO LOVED AIRPLANES.
THAT'S SO CUTE.
PAT


SINCE WE'RE HERE, WHAT DO YOU SAY TO A BOAT RIDE?
OR NOT?
LUNCH WAS DELI-CIOUS. THANKS AGAIN.
THERE'S NO TIME TODAY. LOOK AT IT WHEN YOU GET HOME.
HUH? BUT I HAVEN'T FINISHED READING IT YET.
I'D LOVE TO!
TMP たたたTMP
スタTOMP
スタTOMP
HE'S RIGHT. I CAN TAKE MY TIME READING IT LATER.


THERE'S NOTHING IN THERE THAT'LL UPSET YOU WHEN YOU READ IT.
SO DON'T WORRY.
?
...I ONLY WORRY MORE.
WHEN YOU SAY THAT...
...TO MAKE ME FEEL BETTER.
BUT AT LEAST HE'S TRYING...





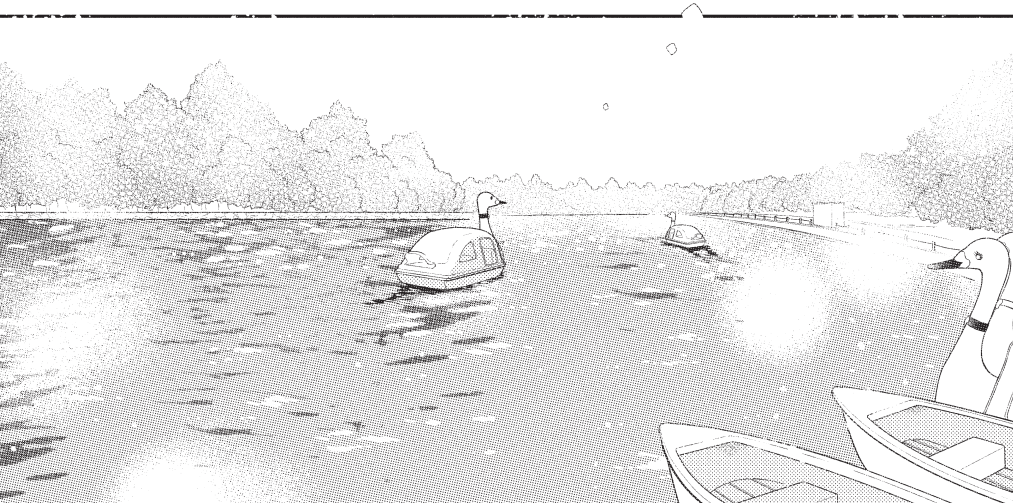



DID YOU JUST TAKE MY PICTURE?
...
OH, THERE'S NO LINE.
NICE.
GRIN
TAP
Sorry.
ITSUOMI-SAN...

...WHEN I REMEMBER HOW HAPPY I WAS...

...TO HEAR YOU SAY YOU WERE OKAY WITH EVERYTHING...

...I HAVE TO WORK HARD TO CALM MYSELF DOWN.



THE SWAN BOAT WAS ROCKING SO MUCH...

...IT FELT LIKE IT WAS AMPLIFYING THE THUMPING OF MY HEART...

...SO I HAD TO FORCE A SMILE ONTO MY FACE...

...TO KEEP MYSELF FROM CRYING.

To be continued in Volume 6



Thank you for reading Volume 5 of *A Sign of Affection*. With the musical and merchandise now released, there are more ways than ever for *A Sign of Affection* to touch people's lives, for which I am beyond grateful. ~~
The comments on my social media accounts and fan letters I receive give me so much encouragement, too. Thank you.✧✧
Well, see you again in Volume 6! ♡



The signs for the Japanese title, *Yubisaki to renren* ("fingertips and love")

(Of course you can finger spell it, too.)

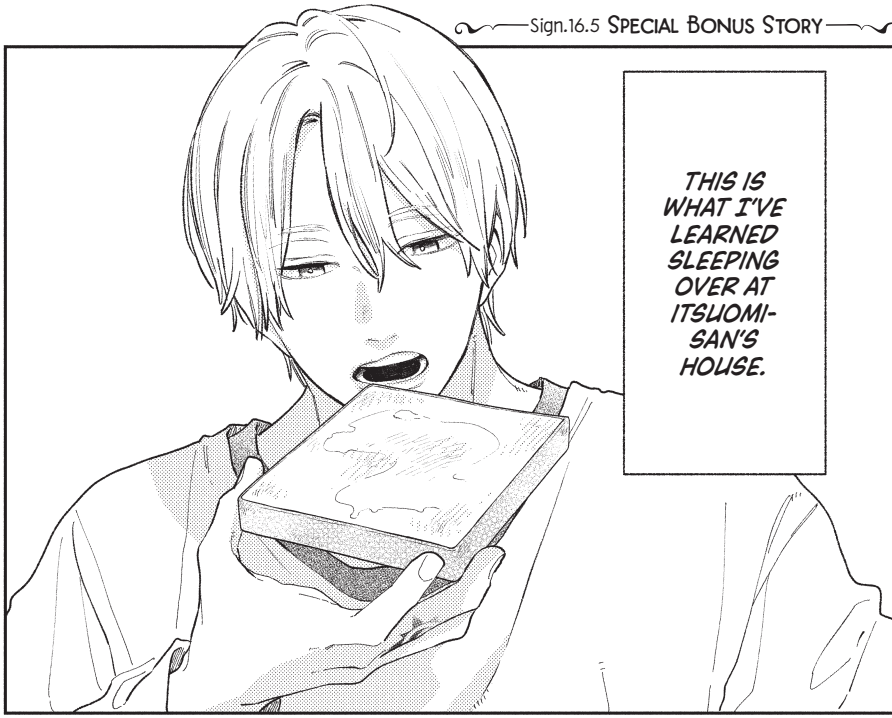
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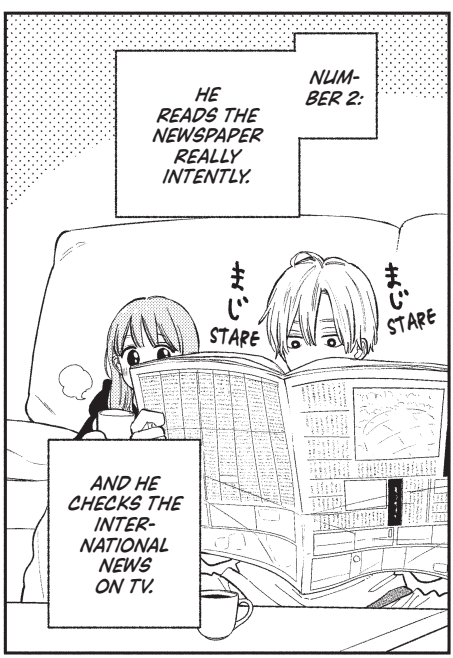
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All of my readers! ♡

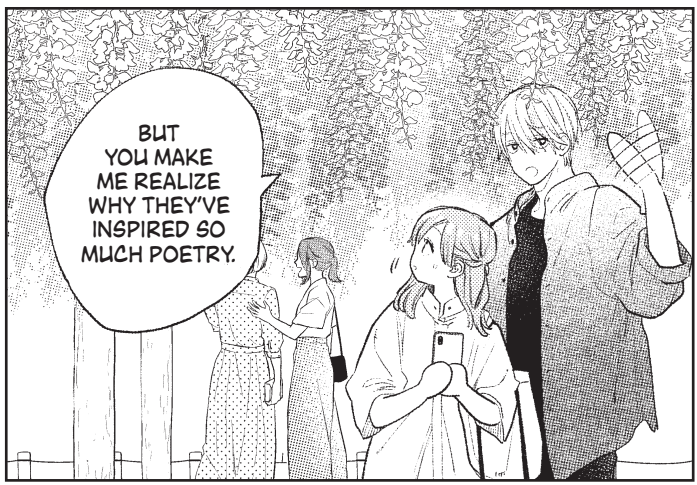

THIS IS WHAT I'VE LEARNED SLEEPING OVER AT ITSUOMI-SAN'S HOUSE.


NUM-BER 2:
HE READS THE NEWSPAPER REALLY INTENTLY.
まじ STARE
まじ STARE
AND HE CHECKS THE INTER-NATIONAL NEWS ON TV.


BRISK
BRISK
NUM-BER 1:
ITSUOMI-SAN HAS A SUPER EASY TIME WAKING UP.
DAZE
BUZZ BUZZ
6:30
Alarm
I BARELY SLEPT AT ALL...


NUMBER 3:
HE'LL ONLY DRINK BLACK COFFEE.
NUMBER 4:
HE LIKES HIS FRIED EGG AND BACON COOKED UNTIL CRISPY.
NUMBER 5:
HE'LL WASH THE DISHES AT HIGH SPEED.
WASH
WASH
FWP FWP FWP
...HE HAS THIS DILIGENT LOOK IN HIS EYES.
WHATEVER HE'S DOING...
AND I'M HAPPY TO GET TO SEE THAT...
...BY HIS SIDE, FIRST THING IN THE MORNING.

Translation Note



"Why they've inspired so much poetry," page 137
In the original Japanese version, Itsuomi says, "It's enough to make me realize why people use the phrase *setsugetsufuuka*." This is an idiom made up of four Chinese characters, like many Japanese sayings. *Setsu* means snow, *getsu* means moon, *fuu* means wind, and *ka* means flower. These four words are common *kigo*, or "season words," associated with winter, autumn, summer, and spring, respectively. Kigo are some of the most important elements of traditional Japanese poetry: the famous haiku, as well as *tanka*, *renga* (linked verse), and others. They can be used in a variety of ways, including as symbols, for pathos, or as synecdoche to invoke a variety of details about the setting, such as the temperature, weather, and location. Their accumulated meaning is especially important given the short length of many Japanese poems, in which each word must convey as much as possible.


A SIGN OF
AFFECTION




A SIGN OF
AFFECTION

A Sign of Affection 5

Kodansha Digital Edition

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